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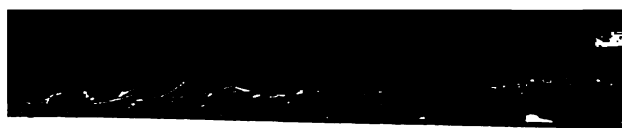
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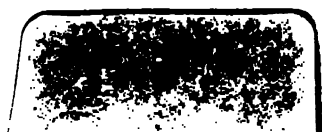


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NOTES
OF A
CLERICAL FURLOUGH.







NOTES
OF A
CLERICAL FURLOUGH,
SPENT CHIEFLY
IN THE HOLY LAND.

WITH A SKETCH OF THE VOYAGE OUT IN THE
YACHT "ST. URSULA."

BY ROBERT BUCHANAN, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE TEN YEARS' CONFLICT."


THIRD THOUSAND.



LONDON:
BLACKIE AND SON, WARWICK SQUARE, E.C.,
AND GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH.

MDCCLXIX.





TO
HUGH TENNENT, Esq., OF WELLPARK,

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS KINDNESS
AS AN EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL ESTEEM AND REGARD,
AND IN

MEMORY OF THE HAPPY DAYS SPENT TOGETHER IN
THE "ST. URSULA."

This Volume is Affectionately Inscribed

BY
THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

MURRAY'S recently issued and very able *Handbook for Syria and Palestine* offers hints to travellers in these countries on various points, and, among others, "on the propriety of publishing." "Every one," the writer of that work observes, "must exercise his own good taste and wisdom in that respect; but 'a journal' has a real and absorbing interest, apart from all thought of Albermarle Street or Paternoster Row."

In the matter of publishing, it is to be feared that an author's *own* taste and wisdom are not always very safe guides. Considering that of many books on the Holy Land there seems, in the present day, to be literally "no end," it may well be supposed it has not been without hesitation and diffidence that the author of the "CLERICAL FURLOUGH" has ventured to add one to the number. If, however, the volume should have no other merit, it has at least that of being substantially "a journal." It is not a compilation got up at home, but a *bona fide* personal narrative. It simply corrects, arranges, and amplifies what was written from day to day on the spot. What it aims at is to enable the reader to see what the writer saw, and to hear what he heard. He does not pretend

to be a discoverer. In his opinion, there has been too much pretension of that sort already, and sometimes on absurdly slight and insufficient grounds. He makes no claim to be regarded as an authority on any of the numerous unsettled questions which still lie open for investigation and discussion, in connection with the history, the antiquities, and the topography of Judea. On many of these, indeed, he has formed his own opinion, and on some of them he has ventured to express it; but his main object has been so to set things before the reader that, when he comes to the end of the journey, he may have some definite conception of the sort of country he has been passing through, and may know nearly if not altogether as much about it as the writer knows himself.

The journey will be found to embrace a large proportion of the most interesting localities in the Holy Land. Conducted from Jaffa, on the shores of the Levant, to Jericho and the Dead Sea—from the vicinity of Hebron to the sources of the Jordan—the reader will travel over the entire breadth, and very nearly over the whole length, of the land. He will visit all the lakes of the Jordan valley, and, at various points, the Jordan itself, from the Sea of Sodom, at its southern extremity, to the waters of Merom, and the magnificent scenery of Banias, at the base of the Jebel-es-Sheikh—the mighty Hermon. He will pass through all the chief scenes of Scripture history, from the hill country of Judah to Dan—including Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Bethel, Shechem, Samaria, Jezreel, Nazareth, and Tiberias. Crossing the shoulder of Hermon, and

descending into the great plain beyond it, he will visit Damascus—the oldest of inhabited cities; thereafter, traversing the treble range of Anti-Libanus to the ruins of Baalbek, and passing through Coele-Syria, he will ascend the snowy heights of Lebanon, survey its majestic cedars, and finally, in the beautiful Bay of Tripoli, regain the good yacht *St. Ursula*, which brought him all the way from home. The route, no doubt, is one over which many travellers have passed; but every one has his own way of looking at things; and, in a land of such undying and inexhaustible interest, though so much has been reaped, there is still not a little to be gleaned.

The volume, as will be seen, makes no show of either references or notes. It would have been the easiest thing possible, to plant a whole forest of them at the bottom of every page. In more elaborate works they are, perhaps, indispensable. In such a volume as this they could serve hardly any other purpose than that of wearying and perplexing the reader. Whatever seemed necessary in this department, the author has endeavoured to work into the text; and so as to supply the information required, without interrupting the flow of the narrative. In doing so he has generally compared his observations with those of the authors of most authority upon the subject; and as the result of this comparison his own have been sometimes corrected, and often made fuller and more complete. To these authors, in common with all who would either write about or travel in Palestine intelligently, he owes a debt of gratitude, which he esteems it equally r

and a privilege to acknowledge. The limits within which he has thought it expedient to confine the size of the volume, together with the incessant pressure of his ordinary avocations while preparing it, have obliged him considerably to abridge the latter part of the narrative.

One object he has had especially in view,—to gather around his course the manifold associations of Scripture, and by connecting, as much as possible, each successive scene with the sacred history which it so vividly recalls, to make the reader participate in the delightful conviction which, at every step, was forced more irresistibly upon his own mind, that the Bible history is, and must be, both real and true. This conviction, though only confirming a belief that was solid and settled before, the author felt to be the best reward of a journey through the Holy Land. If his experience in this particular shall help to communicate a like feeling to the mind of any of those who may honour his volume with a perusal, it will not have been written in vain.

GLASGOW, 25th February, 1859.



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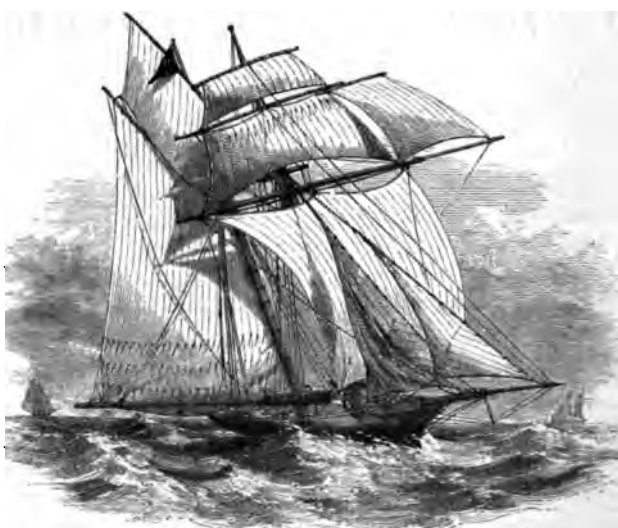
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THE YACHT "ST. URSULA."



NOTES OF A CLERICAL FURLOUGH.

CHAPTER I.

The voyage and its incidents, from the Clyde to the Mediterranean—A passing view of Gibraltar, Malta, and Alexandria—A visit to Cairo, Memphis, and the Pyramids.

EARLY in the spring of 1857, the state of my health had made it necessary that I should leave home. Four and twenty years' uninterrupted service in the Christian ministry in a great city had begun at length to tell upon my constitution in effects which it seemed unsafe to trifle with. The medicine most needed, in the opinion of the competent authorities, was a good clerical furlough, to be spent as far away as possible from the

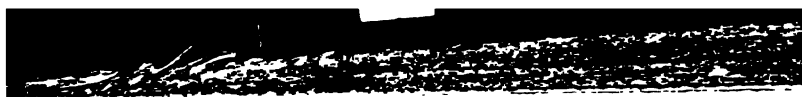
“—— fumus strepitusque Romæ.”

The leave was promptly and cordially granted by my ecclesiastical superiors, but the embarrassing question remained—Where was I to go? We were only as yet in the middle of February, and the weather was cold and stormy. It was not a time, as Baillie Nicol Jarvie would have said, to turn one's back on “the comforts of the Saltmarket.” Bile and dyspepsia shrink with instinctive dread from the chilling winds and the damp beds which a journey at so inclement a season of the year inevitably suggests. All at once, however, and quite unexpectedly, a way of escape was opened for me out of these doubts

and difficulties. One day while I was in the very act of ruminating on them in my study, an esteemed friend, Mr. Tennent, of Wellpark, who had heard of my perplexity, came in and accosted me in some such words as these—"My yacht, the *St. Ursula*, is getting ready for sea. In a fortnight I sail for the Mediterranean. Come with me. A week will carry us into a warmer climate. I shall go where you like—to Italy, Egypt, or the Holy Land!"

Here was an offer worth all the prescriptions of all the Medical Faculties in the world. I grew well at the very thought of it. I had had my day-dreams, many a time, about the Nile and the pyramids, about Jerusalem and the Dead Sea; but that I should ever tread the soil of the land of the Pharaohs, or see that city where my Lord was crucified, had, up till that moment, appeared to be among the unlikeliest of human things. To enhance the attractiveness of this proposal, it was made, by its kind author, part and parcel of it that my wife and one of the members of my family should accompany me. It needs not to say that this somewhat exciting interview decided my course. The requisite preparations were quickly made, and at three P.M. on Wednesday, the 4th of March, we left Glasgow by rail to join the yacht. At Greenock we got into one of the Clyde steamers, and by six o'clock we were on board the *St. Ursula*, which was lying at anchor in the bay of the beautiful village of Fairlie, on the coast of Ayrshire, about a mile off from her owner's country-house.

It had been blowing hard all day, but towards evening the wind fell, the sky cleared, and everything seemed to promise well for the morrow, when we were to proceed upon our voyage. Our sailing party, eight in number, had all arrived. They consisted of three ladies, Mrs. H. P., Miss L., and Mrs. B.; of four gentlemen,—Mr. Tennent and his brother, the Rev. Mr. Grant Brown, my son Laurence, a boy of ten years of age, and myself. Mr. Brown had been a missionary to the Jews in Syria and Egypt, and his knowledge of these countries and of the



Arabic tongue promised to make him of much service to us, both as an interpreter and as a guide.

The yacht had a crew, including the active and intelligent master, Mr. Cairney, of ten seamen, besides a cook and steward. We were, therefore, in all twenty souls. As for the gallant craft in which we had embarked, she was a Cowes-built, schooner-rigged yacht, of nearly 200 tons burden; fit for all weathers and for any sea. Save the anchor watch, all hands mustered in the saloon to join in our evening worship, in which, before quitting our native shores, we committed both ourselves and the friends we were leaving behind to the care of Him who is Lord equally of the sea and of the dry land.

About six o'clock on the following morning we weighed anchor and made sail. The beginning of our voyage was somewhat discouraging. During the night the wind had gone round from north to south, and when I went on deck an hour after we left Fairlie Bay, it was already blowing half a gale, and right in our teeth. In the face of it we held on, beating down channel, till we were abreast of Pladda, when it was deemed advisable, instead of crashing any longer into the continually rising sea, to run into Lamlash. As that noble natural harbour of refuge was under our lee, we swept into it in little more than half-an-hour after putting about, and dropped our anchor in the midst of a fleet of fifty or sixty vessels, which had already sought shelter there the same morning or the day before.

Here we lay all that day and the next, the weather showing no signs of improvement. It was rather trying, at the end of two days, to find ourselves not more than five or six hours' sail from home. The incident, however, was not without its use. It gave us a lesson in sea life—showing us its great uncertainties and compelling us to feel and to realize that dependence on a Higher Power which we are naturally so unwilling to acknowledge, and so slow to learn. In the course of the second day, and during a temporary lull of the storm, some of us went ashore, and had an invigorating walk round the head of the bay;

while Mr. Tennent, "on hospitable thoughts intent," contrived at the same time to make purchase, at a farm-house on the hill side, of a fat sheep, which was forthwith slain and sent on board in the evening. The sky, for a few hours that afternoon, had looked so promising than many of the vessels in the bay had got up the second anchor which they had all been compelled to let go, and seemed to be preparing for a start. Before the night fell, however, the rack had become as wild, and the wind as fierce as ever, and the second anchors were all again dropped into the sea.

As for us of the *St. Ursula*, we were resolved at all hazards to venture out next morning, even if we should get no farther than Campbeltown Bay. At eight A.M., accordingly, on Saturday, the 7th of March, we bade farewell to Lamlash. The morning sun, gleaming at intervals through the hurrying clouds, was gilding the snowy peaks of Goatfell as we glided out between the Holy Isle and the mainland of Arran. The wind had come up to the west, and we had comparatively smooth water so long as we were under the wing of the land—beyond it all was storm and fury as before. On however the gallant ship sped at the rate of ten-and-a-half knots an hour, and by three o'clock in the afternoon we were off Donaghadee. Already we were counting on a fine run down the Irish Channel, when gradually, as the day closed in and night came on, the wind fell off more and more to the south, and it became increasingly evident that the best thing we could do would be to fight our way into Kingston harbour, and see what better fortune another day might bring.

The sea was very rough, and sounded below like minute guns as it banged in successive billows against the weather-bow. Wondering what it could mean, when midnight had passed and there were still no symptoms of smoother water, I went on deck to see what was going on, and where we were. We were opposite the hill of Howth. Both wind and tide were coming strong out of Dublin Bay, and there was no possibility of entering it without a long tack seaward to the south-east. It was a fine sight to see our brave ship battling with the gale, as,



with her foresail washed half way up with the foam and spray, and with a treble reef in her mainsail, she bounded along over the raging deep. I remained on deck till we got to our anchorage at two in the morning. The roaring of the sea and the howling of the wind through the rigging, as she was put about to run in towards the land, were terrific. The night was wild in the extreme, but there was good moonlight. With the exception of a pilot-boat that was hanging about the weather-shore, keeping herself out of harm's way, there was not a sail to be seen. Not a man of the crew had left the deck, save to snatch a hasty dinner, since we left Lamlash. They had had a rough day of it; and were, doubtless, as well pleased as the rest of us when we were at length folded within the long arms of the mole harbour of Kingston, as snug and quiet as if we had been anchored in a mill-pond.

Here we spent the Sabbath, throughout the whole of which the gale continued. About five A.M. on Monday the yacht began to rock like a cradle. Knowing that she lay nearly opposite the harbour mouth, it was easy to conjecture the cause of this phenomenon: the wind had shifted to the north, and was now sending the swell right in upon us. This was some consolation for having our rest disturbed at so early an hour. The weather-glasses, of which we had three—the common mercurial barometer, the aneroid, and the sympesometer—were all on the rise, a further indication of the “clear weather that cometh out of the north.” By-and-by the clank of the lever and chain gave note of preparation for again putting to sea. On reaching the deck all my auguries were verified. The anchor was already hove short; and as soon as the men had breakfasted, the order was given to sail. It is always an interesting moment the getting under weigh. In this particular case the excitement was not a little increased by the circumstances of our position. A strong breeze was blowing into the harbour mouth, and a great swell was tumbling in along with it. A coasting vessel that had been lying beside us had just lifted her anchor, and

was making the best of her way out. Five or six times successively she edged up to the opening, and as often was baffled in the attempt to escape. It cost her a full half-hour's tacking to and fro before she got clear.

Our turn came next, and we were ill-placed for a move: one vessel lay across our bows within twenty yards, and another about three lengths of us astern. Backing the top-sails the moment the anchor was started, the *St. Ursula* was forced back stern-ways to get clear of the vessel ahead; and when all but touching the other vessel astern, the yards were braced round. She gathered way immediately, and was got by this manœuvre into a more open space. This done, her head was instantly laid for the harbour's mouth; and without needing to make a single tack, she shot slanting out through the narrow opening—all but in the wind's eye—and in five minutes we were at sea. It was cleverly done. The sky was now clear, and the sun shone brightly out, though the hills all round the noble bay, from Howth on the one side to Killiney on the other, were white with snow. By three in the afternoon we were passing the Tuskar light, having run down the Irish coast thus far at the rate of ten knots an hour. The wind was fair, the sky without a cloud, the sea had gone down, and everything appeared to betoken a quiet passage across the redoubtable Bay of Biscay, towards which we were now steering steadily on. We thought we had seen the last of old Ireland when its fading coast-line melted away in the distance as the daylight disappeared. But we were not to be done with it so soon. When the sun rose next morning, it found us rolling about in the open sea, upon the slow heaving swell of the Atlantic, with hardly a breath to fill the sails.

In a few hours the wind began to rise, and from the very opposite point of the compass to the wind of yesterday. By mid-day it had risen to a gale. To avoid burying her sharp bows in the heavy seas we lay to. The main boom was made fast amidships, and with nothing but the trysail and staysail



shown to the wind, she swam like a duck, scarcely taking a drop of water on board. At five in the afternoon, however, as the storm was rapidly increasing, and there seemed no doubt that we were fairly in for the equinoctial gales, it was decided to make for Cork, and to take refuge for a day or two at the Cove.

To run down in a gale of wind on a lee shore at night is somewhat hazardous. We had moonlight, it is true, but the sky was covered with thick clouds, and driving blasts of rain made the distance hazy and dark. To keep Cork under our lee Mr. Cairney resolved to steer on the Kinsale light, which, being nearly 200 feet above the level of the sea, and very brilliant, is seen much farther off than the Cork light, which is greatly lower in position, and of a dull red. We were about forty-five miles south-east of Kinsale when we put about, and in three hours we sighted the light. Having got far enough in to catch the loom of the land, we ran down the coast before the wind, which was now blowing fiercely from the south-west. The entrance into the capacious and magnificent harbour of Cork forms the apex of a triangle, of which the open sea is the base, and the sides are the converging coast lines. Nothing could be grander than the scene which was here exhibited. Driven into this continually narrowing space the sea was all lashed into sheets of foam, over which the yacht, with only her stay and top sails set, rushed along at twelve or thirteen knots an hour.

At a little before ten o'clock we swept in through the gigantic gateway—the break in the rocky wall of the coast—which forms the entrance into the noble harbour. In a few minutes more we had rounded Spike Island, and dropped our anchor off Queens-town, in waters which the storm could not reach. We had been “reeling to and fro, and staggering like a drunken man,” and now we had got into the “desired haven.” In our evening worship we sung the portion of the 107th psalm in which that expressive imagery is employed. We had realized all the force and power of its application literally considered; we now tried to take home its spiritual meaning, and sought that when life's

troubled voyage should have come to a close, we might gain that heavenly harbour where all is safety and peace.

To a landsman, a voyage at sea is the opening up of an entirely new department of life. Everything is strange. The very sounds he hears, and the sights that meet his eye, are such as to suggest continually that he is in quite a different sort of world from the one in which he has been accustomed to live.

When he awakes in the night, the gurgling, gushing noise of the water close to his ear, reminds him, perhaps somewhat unpleasantly, that there is only a plank between him and the devouring deep. When wearied and worn out at times with the incessant creaking and rolling of the ship, he begins to grow impatient of the annoyance, and would fain escape into some quieter place where his rest would no longer be so cruelly disturbed, the unwelcome thought gradually dawns upon his mind that escape is simply impossible, and that the creaking and rolling must just go on till another and mightier will than his has decided that it shall cease. He is haunted, too, ever and anon, with a painful feeling of his own utter ignorance and uncertainty as to what may be going to happen. That sudden fall of some heavy tackle on the deck, or those hurrying feet running backwards and forwards immediately above his head—what can they mean? They startle him out of his sleep, and set him upon all sorts of conjectures. But what can he do? Even were he to get up and try to grope his way to the companion, the chances are, he would succeed in nothing but in losing his way and breaking his head or his shins against something or other in the dark. It is then he feels, as he never felt before, the cutting force of Dr. Johnson's definition of a ship at sea, as being a place in which one is imprisoned, with the additional disadvantage of the risk of being drowned.

This, to be sure, is only one side of the picture. It has other and more pleasing aspects, especially to those who are possessed of tolerably good nerves, and who, like myself, enjoy a happy immunity from that peculiar malady which constitutes to many



the grand misery of the sea. Look at that great ocean across which the ship is pursuing her trackless course. What endless varieties it exhibits. At one time, lying motionless in the calm, it seems, in its perfect quiescence, as if it would never stir again. Anon rippling with the gentle breeze, like the sweet playful face of a child dimpling all over with smiles, it looks so innocent and harmless that timidity itself grows bold. A few hours more—sometimes far less—and the child has become a giant, the smile has passed into a terrific frown, and, lashed into fury by the rising storm, the raging deep tosses the vexed ship like a feather on its heaving breast. And yet this changeful mood is one of old Ocean's chiefest charms. There is no condition it assumes that so soon becomes unbearable as a breathless calm. As day after day passes on and the ship lies lazily looking down on its own unmoving shadow, or rolling idly from side to side on the unbroken swell of the glassy sea, every eye begins to look wistfully out for the signs of the coming breeze, and every ear longs to hear again the loud piping winds. Experience soon tells on even the least courageous, and teaches them to smile at their former fears. What the Italian poet so beautifully describes, a voyage of a few weeks seldom fails to enable even the timidest to understand, if not thoroughly to realize:—

Chi mai non vide fuggir le sponde
La prima volta che va per l'onde;
Crede ogni stella per lui funesta,
Teme ogni zeffiro come tempesta.
Un picciol moto tremar lo fa,
Ma reso esperto si poco teme
Che dorme al suono del mar che freme
O sulla prora cantando va.

But, for the reader's sake, I must get out of Queenstown, as the Cove of Cork is now called, as soon as possible. We entered it on the evening of Tuesday the 10th, and it was on the morning of Wednesday the 18th, that we bade it finally good bye. I say finally, for we had a leave-taking considerably sooner.

Towards evening on the 11th the weather looked so encouraging that orders were issued to sail early next day. When I went on deck that morning about seven o'clock, the sky was bright, the sea smooth, and any wind there was blew out of the north. "We have got a fair wind at last, Mr. Currie," I said, addressing the mate. "Yes, sir," he answered; "but we shall have it all south, and plenty of it ere long." "What makes you think so?" "Look at them fields above the town, sir;"—they were white with hoar frost—"depend on it, sir," continued the mate, "we are not far from a change of both wind and weather."

We made sail notwithstanding, and began to slip down the channel with the tide, aided by the lightest possible air of wind. We had got clear of most of the vessels in the anchorage when we found ourselves suddenly embarrassed by a brigantine lying right in our way. The breeze, however, such as it was, would have served to carry us to leeward, had it not lulled all at once, and left us to be drifted by the strong run of the ebb-tide coming round the spit of Spike Island, right down on the unlucky vessel. All was now excitement: Mr. Cairney shouted to the master of the brigantine to slack out his cable, which, if promptly done, would have allowed us room to pass. With his arms folded, the fellow stood looking at us over his bulwarks, and did nothing but discharge at us a volley of hideous oaths. The next moment we were caught by the heel on his cable; and swinging round in half a second, we had snapped in the collision his top-mast, jib-boom, and spritsail-yard; while one of his spars had most provokingly poked a hole in the clew of our splendid new mainsail. By the help of a kedge anchor, and the brigantine at length paying out more cable, we shook her off and got clear; the detention was just long enough to settle the question of our sailing for that day at least. Before we got matters arranged with this troublesome customer, the mate's prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter. The wind was already blowing in strong gusts from the south; the sun was hid in a threatening bank of clouds, and the gale was rising fast. Had we been fairly at sea we might



have held on. Still inside the harbour mouth, as we were, discretion was deemed the better part of valour, and we betook ourselves to our former position, alongside of H.M.S. *Hogue*, which towered up like a floating fortress beside us.

The gale continued with little intermission for several days. So violent was it even in the Cove that about noon, on Saturday the 14th, our gigantic neighbour broke from her moorings and nearly overwhelmed an unfortunate emigrant ship that had come in the night before with her masts sprung, and was lying two or three hundred yards astern. As the *Hogue* was drifting down upon her the scene was most exciting. Fortunately the anchors thrown out brought up the runaway just as she was getting foul of the emigrant ship. The man-of-war-men clustered like bees along the yards; hatchets were busily plied: steam was got up with all speed, and at length having cut all clear, the huge block-ship weighed, crept slowly up against the wind, and came to anchor at the mouth of the Lee, under the shelter of the high land, where she caught less of the storm.

This protracted delay gave me an opportunity of preaching in the Scotch church on the succeeding Lord's-day. Many of the emigrants had come ashore to be present; and being countrymen of my own, I was glad to have an opportunity of addressing them, and of trying to say something suitable to their condition and prospects. The Scotch church, a tasteful Gothic building, with a very pretty spire, standing as it does on an elevation at the extremity of the town, is one of the most noticeable objects upon the shore of this beautiful bay.

Both the officers of the *Hogue* and the weather-wise people ashore strongly dissuaded us from leaving Queenstown till these gales should have spent their force. One day we made a trip to Cork; another we inspected the dockyards and hospitals, and enjoyed the hospitalities of Haulbowline; a third we rambled about Queenstown itself, but still time was hanging heavily upon our hands. The warm climate we had hoped to reach in a week was now, at the end of a fortnight, as far off as

ever. The worst of it was that the climate in question was likely to be warm overmuch by the time we should get to it, unless we made far greater speed in future than we had been doing hitherto. It was therefore with general joy we at length found ourselves, about ten A.M. of Wednesday the 18th, running gaily out to sea, under a bright sunny sky and with a perfectly favourable wind. The breeze freshened as the day wore on, and our progress was most satisfactory. About five in the afternoon we passed close to a floating wreck, always a touching and solemnizing sight. She seemed to be either a Kinsale hooker, or a French lugger. On the starboard bow, as it rose on the swell, we could make out "No. 18," and "VI"—the first two letters of her name. She was evidently a fishing vessel, for her nets were hanging over the lee gunwale which was submerged in the sea. From her size she must have had a crew of five or six men. There was no vestige remaining of either mast or bowsprit, and the opinion of the seamen was that she must have been run down in the dark. The facts were entered in the log, but the story of the wreck, like that of a thousand others, will probably continue unknown till the day when the sea shall give up her dead.

On the following morning we imagined for a while that we were approaching another spectacle of the same painful kind. I was on deck at sunrise. The long swell of the Atlantic, rising in majestic ridges and sinking down in deep and broad valleys, was singularly grand. As the level sun shot his early rays along the face of the ocean, one side of each watery hollow gleamed in the strong light like a wall of silver, while the other, darkened by its own shadow, was of the deepest bottle green. These vast rollers came sweeping on in long unbroken lines, and only when the yacht was poised for a moment on the summit of the ridge, was it possible to see from the deck to any distance around. At such a moment the look-out had got sight of a vessel, the appearance of which created an immediate stir. The mate, having run up the rigging with the glass, confirmed the observation of the man who had first seen her, that her



masts were hanging overboard. Mr. Cairney was immediately called, and leave asked and given to run towards her as she was about three miles to leeward. It was pleasant to see the eagerness of the men, animated by the hope of rescuing some poor fellow who might be still clinging to the supposed wreck. As we neared her the mystery was cleared up by the discovery that she was simply a French fishing vessel, with her masts hauled down that she might ride easier, and hanging upon her nets as she plied her hardy vocation in the open sea. We tacked immediately, of course, and stood on our own way.

The fine weather with which we left the Cove did not continue with us four and twenty hours. The wind went all round the compass, but always stayed longest in the adverse quarter. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday passed away, and we were still traversing the outer edge of the Bay of Biscay, and contending with the great Atlantic waves. At length, about six o'clock on Monday morning, we got our first sight of the Spanish coast. It was the high land near Cape Ortegal that first met our view. In a few hours we were abreast of Cape Finisterre, the western extremity of Europe, and running rapidly down the Spanish shore. As yet the atmosphere was cold and wintry-like as ever. The mountains of Spain looked quite as bleak as those of our own Scotland had done when we left them more than a fortnight before. By the afternoon we had got as far south as Vigo, when the wind again headed us and rose at the same time into a gale. To keep a good offing we tacked away out into the open sea, and then lay-to all night in a raging storm. This proved however to be the last expiring breath of the equinoctial gales. Towards morning its fury abated, and the wind now coming up into the west, it sent us along at a rapid rate upon our way. In the course of that same day we passed from winter into summer. The gray, bleak, repulsive look disappeared from the face of both sea and sky; the clouds rolled gradually away; the sun shone out with a most reviving warmth; the beautiful shores of Portugal stretched in their soft blue far away

along the line of our course, and Mr. Tennent's promise was at length fulfilled.

It was all fair-weather sailing with us now onwards to Gibraltar. About one P.M. on Wednesday we were opposite that magnificent headland, the Rock of Lisbon. At the same hour on the day following we passed Cape St. Vincent, where Sir John Jarvis won his great victory and founded the title of his family. On Friday we were becalmed for several hours in the Bay of Cadiz, where the heat was so great that the pitch began to ooze out from the seams of the deck. In the evening we passed Cape Trafalgar, the scene of the crowning victory and glorious death of the heroic Nelson. And on the morning of Saturday the 28th, about nine o'clock, we dropped our anchor beneath the Rock of Gibraltar.

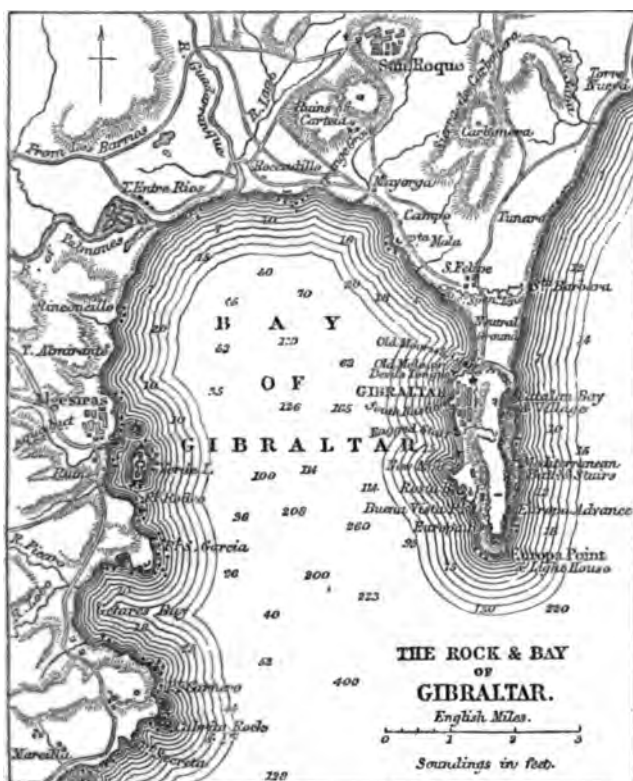
We had been much retarded during the previous night by a dense fog, which for many hours made it impossible to see twenty yards from the ship. Off Cape Trafalgar, and eastwards along the Spanish shore, there are many formidable reefs and shoals, which embarrassed us not a little. The wind was light, and the indraught of the current at one time bore us down upon the ticklish ground, till the lead-line showed us only three and a half fathoms. Fortunately the breeze freshened when we most needed it, and we stood over towards the African coast. The detention caused by the fog did us this favour, however, that it kept us hanging on about the mouth of the Straits till the dawn, and thus gave us the advantage of daylight for the magnificent scenery which lines, on either hand, the entrance into the Mediterranean.

The mountains on the African side have the undoubted pre-eminence in elevation and grandeur. The Bay of Gibraltar runs up six or seven miles into the land, and is about five miles broad. The noble range of the Tarifa mountains bounds its western shore, and the ancient moorish-looking town of Algesiras lies at their feet. On the summit of the lower range of hills that slope upwards from the head of the bay stands the town of St.

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Roque, and immediately to the east of it, there is an eminence called the Queen of Spain's Seat, in allusion to a story that when Gibraltar was taken in 1704, the Spanish Queen sat there disconsolate for three days. The Rock of Gibraltar itself, rising



abruptly to the height of 1450 feet, and about three miles in length, shuts in the bay on the east. The town of Gibraltar lies at the base of the north-western face of the rock. The barracks and the suburban residences of the chief officers and of the

commercial magnates of the place stretch away southwards from the town, along the shores of the bay, as far as to Europa Point, the seaward extremity of the rock.

The rock itself has the sea on three sides of it—on the west, south, and east. At the north end it descends in a precipice of eleven or twelve hundred feet upon the narrow, flat, and sandy isthmus which joins it on to the mainland of Spain. A very slight elevation of the sea would completely submerge this isthmus and make the rock one of “the British isles.” On the north and east it is impregnable by nature, rising, as it does on these two sides, right up like a wall for more than a thousand feet. At the southern extremity, and along its western base from Europa Point to the isthmus, there is some little space between the rock and the sea; and here every inch of the ground is elaborately fortified. The rock itself is a huge mass of limestone, gray and weather-beaten, but full of strong vegetation, which pushes out from every crevice, and almost clothes the lower half of the hill in a verdant and flowery mantle of exquisite beauty.

Scarcely had we cast anchor in the bay when the *pratique* boat was alongside of us, and a demand made for our bill of health. It was handed immediately to one of the pratique boatmen, who laid hold of it with a long pair of tongs, and in this fashion presented it to the visiting officer. This functionary, grasping it, in his turn, with a similar instrument, placed it on one of the thwarts of his boat, turned it over with the points of the tongs, and finding that all was right, informed us we might land when we pleased. We did so immediately; and were greatly amused and interested with the whole scene around us. The light feluccas, with their triangular sails dashing in and out as we approached the mole; the endless varieties of costume when we reached it; the Babel of strange tongues; the pannier-laden donkeys; the fine Spanish mules; the intensely warlike aspect of the place—soldiers at every turn, cannon overlooking every approach—formed altogether a combination as striking as it was novel. There was the turbaned Moor, with



his bare bronzed legs and sandalled feet, clad in his coarse striped haik, strolling about with his long stride and careless air; there was the black-capped Barbary Jew, with his dark cunning eyes, his round dumpy figure and *gausie* look, sailing along in his capacious blue blouse and white sash; there was the sharp-witted Greek with his little red Albanian cap; there was the dark-whiskered Spaniard with his round sombrero, like a turban of black felt, his short jacket, red sash, and knee breeches; there was the Genoese native of Gibraltar, with his semi-English costume; there were the various classes of our own military—the 92d Highlander with his tartan kilt and grand feathered bonnet, the artillery-man in his smart blue uniform and the red-frocked engineer; and among these, every now and then, there appeared the unmistakeable face of the canny Scotch merchant, evidently thriving in the midst of this multifarious throng, and probably making his own out of them all.

There are few places in the world where so many tribes and tongues are represented within so limited a space. And no wonder; for Gibraltar is, in some sense, the central point between the four quarters of the world. It is the stepping-stone that connects Europe and Africa, and it is the half-way house between America and Asia. After a short ramble through the town, my wife, my little boy, and myself, procured at the civil police office a permit to ascend the hill, which, however, seemed to be of no manner of use, as no one ever questioned us, or asked a sight of the document. Escorted by a young Spanish gentleman, we went first to the *excavations*, as they are called—batteries tunnelled inside the face of the solid rock. In these we penetrated as far as to St. George's Hall, overhanging the isthmus. It is a rude but spacious cavern, scooped out of the live rock. The windows are rugged embrasures, through which heavy guns look ominously out—those in front commanding the isthmus, those on the left sweeping the bay and the shipping, and those on the right having a wide range over the Mediterranean. From the embrasures the rock descends in a sheer pre-

cipice of 500 or 600 feet, and ascends to about the same height above. In the face of the same gigantic wall of rock, about 100 feet lower down, there is another excavation, or long tunnel, loop-holed all along in the same fashion as the one through which we had passed, and, like it, mounted with heavy ordnance. A third battery crowns the summit of this northern face of the hill, which thus looks down like a huge three-decker anchored alongside of Spain. All these tiers of batteries communicate internally with each other by spiral stairs cut through the heart of the rock. There are altogether, we were informed, about 900 pieces of artillery mounted upon the Rock of Gibraltar.

Leaving the excavations, we toiled up the well-made zig-zags and long slanting paths, along the face of the gray-lichened rocks, till we reached the signal station, which is placed near the middle of the ridge-line of the rock. Here there are three men always on duty, with a powerful telescope beside them. Their business is to signal the approach of the steam-packets, and to give notice of every ship that enters the bay, by hoisting a ball or flag distinctive of her class and country.

The ridge is very narrow. The rock, in short, is like a gigantic wedge resting on the broad end, and with the sharp edge turned up to the sky. The little paved plateau of the signal station is not more than twenty feet broad. To lean over the wall on the one side of it, is to look right down on the Mediterranean. To do the same thing on the other, is to overhang the fortifications that line the shores of Gibraltar Bay. The view from this point is superb. Looking southward across the Straits we had before us the rugged and lofty mountains of Africa, with the stupendous Ape's Hill, rising high above them all; westwards, beyond the bay, we were confronted by the Tarifa mountains in Spain; northwards, the Ronda mountains, conical shaped, of great height, and flecked with snow, bounded the view; and down the long withdrawing valleys that lie between these and the Tarifa mountains, gleamed the winding silvery lines of two fine rivers which finally discharge their waters into the head



of the bay; eastwards, the broad, blue, sapphire-like floor of the Mediterranean stretched away from the base of the rock, bright and unruffled as the azure heaven above. Where else could one hope to combine, in one single view, so much beauty and grandeur of natural scenery, with so much of profoundly interesting historical association. We were standing on one of those pillars of Hercules that bounded, in this direction, the geography of the ancient world, and we were looking out, between those pillars, on that glorious maritime gateway through which Columbus went forth to discover the New World; which now vies in arts, intelligence, and energy, with the most cultivated countries of the Old. We had lying at our feet, and immediately above the present town of Gibraltar, the ancient Moorish fort, built upwards of 1100 years ago, and reminding us of the African torrent that once rolled northwards to the Pyrenees, and that threatened to subjugate Europe to the Moslem power and faith. And, finally, from the summit of the rock, there floated above our heads the "meteor flag of England," telling how triumphantly that torrent has been driven back; and how, not the arms merely, but the civilization and the Christianity of the most advanced of European nations, are marching onwards in that grand "crusade" that is to sweep barbarism away before it, and to enlighten and to bless the whole southern and eastern world.

In the afternoon a kind friend, a resident in Gibraltar, drove us out to his country villa at Campomento, about two miles beyond the Spanish lines. The road for a considerable part of the way lies along the beach, on the very margin of the sea. Here we had a third horse put to the carriage to help us over the soft sand, and we dashed along with the wheels on one side of the carriage splashing through the water. This beach seems to be the favourite ride of the English at Gibraltar, many of whom, ladies and gentlemen, we met cantering along on horseback, enjoying the fresh sea breeze. To us the most interesting sight was the endless line of peasants, some with their donkeys and panniers, others with their small carts, returning home, after

having disposed of the fruits, vegetables, milk, &c., which they had carried into the town. At the Spanish lines—the point where the Spanish territory begins—the carts and panniers of a multitude of these peasants were undergoing examination by the Spanish custom-house officers. It seems that, through the peasants, a brisk smuggling trade is carried on, in all sorts of wares, especially those of English manufacture.

Campomento, to which our drive extended, is so called as having been the place where the combined forces of France and Spain encamped, when prosecuting the memorable siege of Gibraltar, near the close of last century. The wheat in the neighbouring fields was about as far advanced as it is with us in the middle of June, and the barley was in ear. In our friend's pretty little garden, roses, stock gillyflower, lilies of the Nile, &c., &c., were in full bloom. In returning we crossed by the Spanish lines to the eastern side of the isthmus. This route conducted us to the base of the rock where it springs up from the sandy plain in a perpendicular precipice of twelve or thirteen hundred feet. Turning westwards beneath this mighty wall we entered, at the point where the rock meets Gibraltar Bay, the gate of the town, and hurried down through an inner gate to the mole, just in time to get back to our home in the yacht. The gun-fire at ten minutes to seven o'clock P.M. shuts all the gates of Gibraltar, after which there is no getting out without special permission.

Next day was the Sabbath. It had been arranged that Mr. Grant Brown should conduct the early morning service in the Presbyterian church of Gibraltar, and that I should take that of the forenoon. The former service was devoted to the 92d regiment, who attended in a body, and filled the entire church. The second service was for the Scotch civilians, and for such detachments from the artillery and the other regiments in garrison as might belong to the Presbyterian church. The place of worship was built by the Free Church of Scotland, and occupies an excellent position, standing, as it does, in one of the principal

squares of the town. It is a handsome structure, with a very pretty tower. I was not present in the morning, having remained in the yacht to conduct Divine service on board, as only a limited number of our men could be allowed to come ashore. At the forenoon service in the church the centre of the area below was occupied by the civilians, while the aisles and the galleries were crowded with soldiers. I never preached to a more interesting, or to a seemingly more attentive audience. It was a great happiness and privilege to have an opportunity of preaching the gospel to these poor fellows, far away from their native land, and many of whom had come through all the terrible and trying scenes of the Crimean war.

The excellent and faithful Free Church minister, the Rev. Mr. Sutherland, has here a very important and extensive field of labour, both among the soldiers and the citizens. Moreover, Gibraltar is a door of entrance for God's Word into Spain; and every day tracts and religious books are made to pass through it. We found labouring under Mr. Sutherland's auspices, a Spanish refugee, M. Rouette, a lawyer, who had come to Gibraltar about five months before. He had suffered an imprisonment in Spain of seven months, for the sole crime of preaching Christ to his benighted countrymen. He was now under sentence of banishment from his own country till he should consent to return to the bosom of the Papal church. Though shut out from Spain, he had still access to his countrymen, many of whom attended his meetings to hear the Word of God. Nor is that Word bound. From Gibraltar it contrives to enter Spain, where its influence appears to be decidedly on the increase, and where Protestant truth is evidently gaining ground.

The following morning we were ashore by seven o'clock. A carriage, previously engaged, was waiting for those of us who had determined on seeing a little more of the scenery of the rock. We drove down, accordingly, to Europa Point, taking the upper road in going, and the lower in returning. It took us quite by surprise to find so much, both of variety and beauty,

within so limited a space; winding, as the road does, up and down among the rocks, and through the countless little picturesque ravines that furrow the base of the hill, every hundred yards presents a new scene. The vegetation was everywhere luxuriant beyond description; the gardens were all glowing with gay and brilliant flowers; the peach and pear trees were covered with blossom; the graceful palm rose above the dense foliage of the shrubberies and gardens which clustered around every villa; the lemon and the orange trees were laden with their golden fruit. To add to the charm of this magnificent vegetation, it was springing up in the midst of the ruggedest and most fantastic rocks, through the openings of which every here and there the eye caught enchanting vistas of the sea, and of the noble mountains of Africa and Spain.

In coming back through the town we had a further opportunity of studying that strange medley of peoples and costumes that forms, to a stranger, one of the most curious sights of Gibraltar. The market, near to the north port, and close to the mole where we were about to embark, was the last place we visited. Here all sorts of articles for the table are sold—fish, provisions, vegetables, fruit, eggs, fowls, &c., &c. Most things seemed to be dearer than they are with us at home, excepting oranges and lemons, which were invitingly cheap: the finest oranges in the market, of great size, and of the choicest quality, were sold at four for a penny; lemons at a penny-half-penny a dozen.

At a quarter to twelve, we got into our boat, carrying with us, of course, an ample supply of these delightful fruits. At twelve we were on board, and precisely twenty-five minutes thereafter we had got clear of the shipping and were off. It was blowing a fine breeze from the west. Before one o'clock we had rounded the lighthouse on Europa Point and were lying our course for Malta.

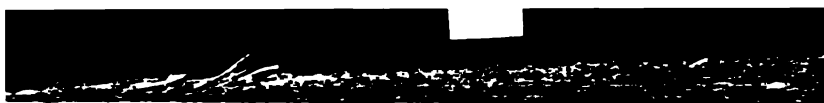
All the afternoon we sped along at the rate of ten to eleven knots an hour, dropping fast and far astern everything that was



going the same way as ourselves. By noon of next day, that is in twenty-three hours, we had run 233 miles. The weather was still fine and the wind fair—too much so for rising to our highest speed. A vessel rigged fore and aft like ours can never make her best out of a following wind. On Thursday the wind, which had slackened greatly during the previous night, freshened up again, and by five in the afternoon we were passing the bald, steep, rugged, volcanic-looking Gallito Islands; our speed had now increased to upwards of twelve knots. A thunder-storm was rolling along the African shore, and all that night the lightnings flashed incessantly, and at times furious showers of enormous hail rattled on the deck and almost cut the faces of the seamen. It was now blowing a gale. With nothing but a double-reefed topsail and a small studding-sail set a few yards above the deck, we were scudding before the wind at the rate of nearly fifteen English miles an hour. The sea was all blown into sheets of foam, and the spin-drift was driving over us like showers of snow.

Hurried along by this furious gale, we passed Cape Bon, where the coast of Africa rounds away to the south, at five A.M. on Friday, and by nine A.M. we were abreast of Pantellaria, a large lofty volcanic island belonging to Sicily. The sea, meanwhile, had the look of a country half covered with snow. The waves were higher than any we had seen in the Bay of Biscay, though much more broken, and wanting the long, continuous, majestic roll of the Atlantic. We had grown familiar with this wild scene. Even the ladies had ceased to be afraid to look at it. They, too, were all, in consequence, on deck about half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, when an accident occurred that considerably discomposed us all. They were holding on around the fore-companion and half enjoying the elemental war. I was standing at the moment on the top of the spare spars that were lashed to the deck, having a firm grasp of one of the hoops of the main-mast, and was watching with great interest the enormous billows incessantly pursuing us, swelling up immediately astern, and

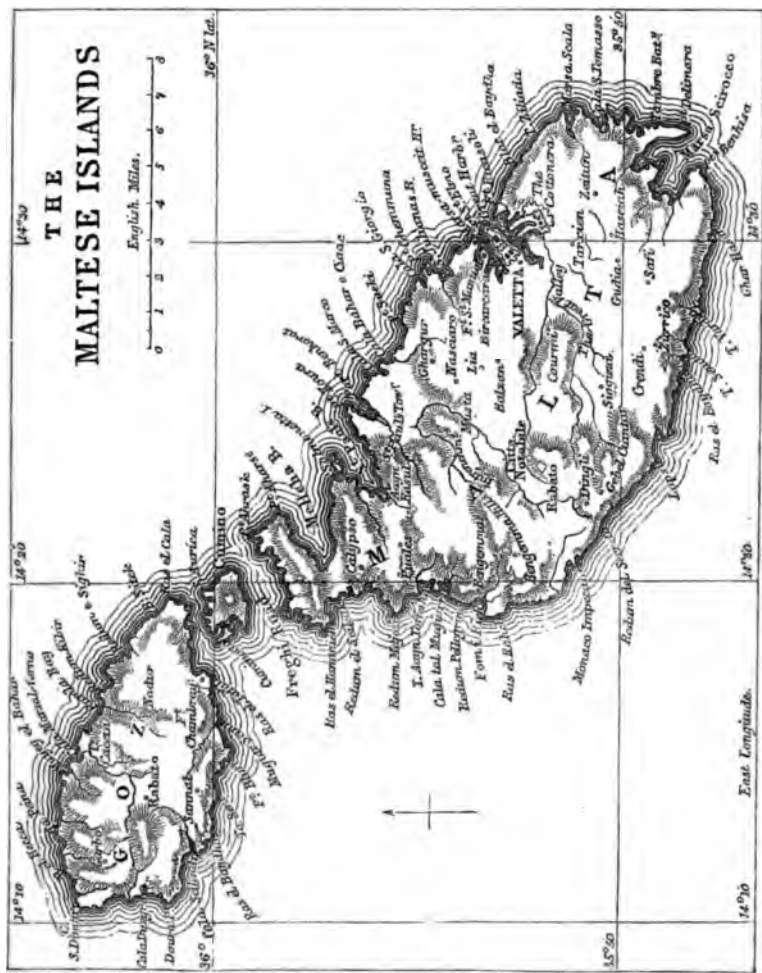
seeming every moment as if they would overtake and engulf the flying ship, but always coming short and sinking down harmlessly behind us. Suddenly one of those *seventh* waves, that seamen speak of, rose like a huge wall high above the poop, curved over and fell bodily, as if it had dropped from the heavens, on the after part of the deck. The tiller-rope was snapped by the shock. At the same moment the wooden grating on which the steersman stood, floating up as the vessel sunk beneath the weight of the wave, threw him off his feet, and dashing like a shot through the bulwarks, as it did the next moment in the roll of the sea, it was by a kind of miracle the man was not sucked out into the deep after it. The end of the tiller-rope that remained fast had fortunately been twisted round his arm and saved him. The helm being left free, and the vessel having begun to come round, the next wave tumbled in over the quarter, and in an instant carried every loose thing about the after-deck into the sea. So high was this wave that it half filled the jolly boat where it hung in the davits, and twisted one of the strong davit irons as if it had been a reed. As the immense body of water rushed forward and swept diagonally across the deck, the ladies were all washed down to leeward; while my little boy, who was standing near me holding on by the hen-coop, was dashed with such violence against the bulwarks that his leg was broken. It was all the work of a moment. Just as the second wave came on board, the Master, a powerful man, seized the helm, and aided by the steersman, who had by this time got to his feet again, the ship was immediately under command. The sails, which fortunately had never lost the wind, were once more fully filled, and the brave *St. Ursula* was again careering along upon her course as if nothing had happened. Excepting poor Laurence no one had sustained any injury. It was but by a hair's breadth, however, that we had escaped a danger of the most formidable kind. Had the helm not been recovered for a few seconds more, the vessel must inevitably have broached-to. Her rapid motion thus suddenly arrested, the



masts would in all probability have gone overboard, and falling helplessly into the trough of such a sea, it is hard to say what might have become of her and of us all.

Distressed though we were about my son, who was suffering most agonizing pain, our grief was not unmingled with gratitude to the Great Preserver of men. The very dashing of the grating through the bulwarks had proved a fortunate occurrence. The ghastly opening of eight or ten feet in length which it made enabled the vessel to throw off more quickly than would otherwise have been possible the enormous load of water that was weighing her down, and thus shortened the critical interval during which she was at the mercy of the waves. The event so sudden and unexpected was a great shock to us all. It was an impressive call—and one which we endeavoured to realize—to remember the uncertainty of human life, and to acknowledge our continual dependence on Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

The sea had made sad work below. Fortunately the after-companion had been closed up since the day before, but enough of water had found its way forward to nearly drown the cook and steward in the pantry and to deluge the saloon. Fortunately our sleeping cabin had in great measure escaped, and with as little delay as possible we got our young and very patient sufferer carried down to his berth. By seven o'clock of the same evening we were up with the island of Gozo; having thus made the voyage in four days, five hours, and twenty minutes, from the rock of Gibraltar to the Maltese Islands—a speed not often equalled by any sailing ship. From this point we were partially sheltered by the land as we ran down the shores of Gozo and Malta; and very happy were we all to find ourselves an hour or two later safely at anchor in the noble harbour of Valetta. It was not the first time since leaving home that we had thus rapidly exchanged the storms of the ocean for a port where all was stillness and security. But on no former occasion was the change more agreeable or opportune. It enabled our



poor patient to lie more at ease, and it brought us within reach of medical aid.

When next morning broke, every trace of the tempest had disappeared. The sun rose into a cloudless sky, and shone with all the warmth and brilliancy of summer. The waters of the capacious harbour lay around us, smooth as a mirror. Countless Maltese boats, all painted of a pale green, and with their gay awnings, and their lofty recurving prows, were gliding about in every direction. Within a hundred yards of us lay the magnificent line-of-battle-ship, the *Conqueror*, and ranged in order near her the other ships of Lord Lyon's fleet. The lofty Baracca, the highest part of the fortifications of Valetta, rose immediately above us; and all round the many creeks and sinuosities of this perfectly land-locked bay, massive castles, and batteries bristling with cannon, frowned defiance on every foe. It is difficult to imagine a scene more thoroughly picturesque or unique.

When the doctor, for whom we had despatched a messenger at daybreak, came on board, somewhat to our surprise, he pronounced our little patient's limb to be not broken, but only badly bruised. It was a relief in the meantime to believe this, though it proved to be a mistake. Soon after, Colonel D——, of the 71st, came on board, and kindly invited us to join a large party, got up by the officers of his regiment, that was about to pay a visit to St. Paul's Bay. Though much obliged by the Colonel's courtesy, we thought it better to make a party of our own. In this way our movements would be more completely under our own command. We were not to remain longer than two or three days in the island, and it was necessary to economize our time. My much-valued friend, Mr. N. Stevenson, of Glasgow, who had arranged to meet us at Malta, made his appearance at breakfast—having arrived, *viâ* France, two days before us. Early in the forenoon, those of us who had never been in Malta before, engaged carriages and started for Citta-Vecchia. This ancient capital of the island is about nine miles from Valetta. It stands on high ground, near the centre of the island, on which

it looks down like an acropolis, being itself visible from almost every part of Malta. The cathedral, with its lofty dome and flanking towers, forms the most conspicuous object upon the skyline when looking towards the interior from any part of the coast.

The country, as we drove out to Citta-Vecchia, interested us exceedingly, from its very peculiar aspect and character. As the surface of the island is all ups and downs, terraces are universal. Every separate field has its retaining wall at the lower side of it, to hinder the scanty soil from being washed away bodily during the heavy rains. Looking up the sloping side of a hill from beneath, one sees nothing but these retaining walls, rising one above another, the flat narrow fields behind them being, from such a point of view, entirely concealed. Thus seen, one would say the hill face was nothing else but a heap of stones, and totally destitute of vegetation. Looking down the same hill from the height above, everything is changed. The walls, like sunk fences, disappear, and nothing is visible but the rich and verdant fields. That which was an Arabia Petrea, as seen from below, became an Arabia Felix, as seen from above. The island is the most populous territory, in proportion to its size, in Europe, and contains upwards of 100,000 inhabitants. The people are evidently very industrious, for not an inch of ground is uncultivated; but they are as evidently very poor. If it were not for the work and wages multitudes of them receive from the government, and from the English residents in Valetta, they could hardly exist. Their dwellings resemble diminutive square towers of a single story in height. Each house has a solitary door, and many of them have no windows. When they have, the windows are unglazed, and shut in simply with a wooden board. These houses of the natives have all flat roofs, which give a decidedly Oriental look to the landscape. The language of the people plainly bespeaks their Moorish origin. It has a much closer affinity with Arabic than with Italian. The great want of the landscape is wood; with the exception of a few locust and olive trees, none else are to be

seen. There are fig and orange trees in abundance, it is true, but they seldom show their heads above the garden walls in which they are carefully cultivated; a real timber tree, such as one sees at the end of every cottage in England, is unknown in Malta.

At Citta-Vecchia we visited the catacombs, the history of which is somewhat obscure. The entrance to them is beneath the church of St. Paul. They are full of tombs, and also of places which indicate that the excavations must at one time or other have been inhabited. There are stone recesses like bed-chambers for both grown people and children; places for cooking food and for grinding corn; and there is also a rude chapel hollowed out of the solid rock, with its altar, and a large rude pillar in the centre supporting the roof—the pillar also being part of the live rock. Under the same church there is another excavation, called the grotto of St. Paul, in which, as the priest who showed us through the place gravely told us, the apostle had lived for three months *per penitenza*. To this grotto, in memory of his having lived so long in it, the apostle, it seems, communicated the miraculous property of never growing any larger, however much of the rock might be dug out of it. And, added the priest, after relating the circumstance—"there is the mattock lying ready for use; you can prove the truth of the story for yourselves!" Had the priest been an Irishman, this appeal might have been safely understood as simply a bit of fun. Coming, however, from the lips of the low-browed, stupid, sullen priest of Malta, it was probably a sincere superstition.

Citta-Vecchia has a very deserted look. Though several of the streets are handsome and well built, there was hardly a human being to be seen in them. The only persons we did see were priests and beggars. The cathedral is a large and handsome edifice, with a ceiling elaborately gilt and decorated. From this ancient city we drove to Paul's Bay, a distance of six or seven miles. Mr. Smith's admirable work on *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, which we had along with us, gave fresh interest to the scene, and enabled us to study it with intelligence and ease. Look-

ing seaward from the head of the bay, Koura Point appeared in the distance on the right or land side, crested with the foam of the waves that were dashing over it. No one who reads Mr. Smith's work can doubt that it was the roar of the breakers on this point, as the gale was driving on the ship of Alexandria through the darkness of the night, that made "the shipmen deem that they drew near to some country." Opposite to that point, the soundings exactly correspond to those recorded in the sacred narrative. On the left, the island of Salmonetta shuts in the bay on the seaward side, while the narrow passage between it and the mainland of Malta indicates the place "where two seas met," and in the neighbourhood of which, when the day dawned, the mariners resolved to beach the ship. After carefully examining the whole question on the spot, it was impossible not to acquiesce in the statement of Mr. Smith, that, "if we attend minutely to the narrative, it will be seen that the number of conditions required to be fulfilled, in order to make any locality agree with it, are so numerous, as to render it morally impossible to suppose that the argument which we find here can be the effect of chance."*

The pic-nic party we had been invited to join were all over at the island of Salmonetta when we were making this study of the bay. In walking round the head of the bay, we overtook a number of the men of the 71st, toiling along under the hot sun, loaded with enormous crates and baskets. "These are the eatables, I suppose," said one of our party as we passed. "Yea, sir," slyly answered one of the soldiers; "and this is our share of them."

In returning to Valetta in the evening, we visited the church of Musta, one of the many villages scattered at short intervals over the island. We had already, in the course of the day, been struck by the contrast between the grandeur of even the ordinary parish churches and the meanness of the dwellings of the people.

* *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, page 126.

Of this contrast the church of Musta afforded a striking example. Standing in the midst of a paltry village, it is such a church as might cope with some of the finest ecclesiastical structures in Naples or Paris. Save St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, there is nothing to compare with it in London. The façade is most imposing; the pillars of enormous girth and height. The entablature is flanked by two noble towers, and the whole building is surmounted by a dome of vast proportions. The church was still unfinished, though they had been working at it for thirty years. After toiling laboriously at their own occupations for six days of the week, the poor people of the parish devote the seventh, the Lord's-day, to the building of the church;—the day that should be specially given to the rearing of the *living* temple is spent on the *material* edifice. Such is the religion of the Church of Rome: and nowhere is that church more thoroughly dominant in all its self-glorifying and people-enslaving arts than in the island of Malta. It was late in the evening when we returned to the yacht.

Next day was the Sabbath. On the same day of the previous week we had been at Gibraltar, where I had enjoyed the privilege of preaching the gospel to fellow-countrymen, and of holding fellowship at the same time with esteemed brethren of my own church. It was a most gratifying circumstance to have arrived in Malta in time to enjoy the same privilege here. After service in the yacht, I went ashore, accompanied by most of our party, and preached in the church of my friend, the Rev. George Wisely. It was a place of worship formerly occupied by that zealous and excellent body of Christians, the Wesleyan Methodists, and subsequently acquired by the Free Church of Scotland. A new Free Church was, at the time of our visit, in course of erection in the same street—the Strada Forni—and was then nearly finished. It is a handsome Gothic structure, the only specimen of that style of architecture in Malta, and has since been opened for public worship. The building in which I preached was quite overcrowded, about one-

half of the audience being made up of soldiers and the other of civilians. Every passage was thronged. The Free Church minister and his assistant were in the habit of conducting, between them, four separate services every Lord's-day. The *first*, at seven A.M., was held in the Palace Chapel, and was devoted to the 71st regiment. The *second*, at eleven A.M., in their own ordinary place of worship, and was designed for the Scotch civilians, and for such detachments of the artillery and of the regiments of the line as might belong to the Presbyterian Church. The *third*, at three P.M., in the suburb of Vittorioso, on the farther side of the great harbour, for the Scotch soldiers in garrison there. The *fourth*, at six P.M., again in the ordinary place of worship, and for the same classes as before. It will be seen from this statement that the Free Church has, in Malta, a large and most important sphere of usefulness which she does well to occupy.

The following day was consumed in making the tour of Valetta itself, the modern capital of the island, and a truly beautiful city, founded three centuries ago by La Valette, whose name it bears, the illustrious Grand-Master of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem; it stands to this day a monument of his fine taste, sound practical wisdom, and strategic skill. It is beautifully and most systematically planned, and occupies a truly commanding position, whether for commerce or war. It stands on a ridge or tongue of land about a mile and a half in length, and less than half a mile in breadth, with a magnificent natural harbour running along its whole length on either side—the main harbour on the one side, and the quarantine harbour on the other. Its numerous batteries command every approach from the sea. On the land side, the ridge on which the town is built drops down in steep walls of rock, every foot of which is covered with elaborate fortifications. To protect Valetta detached forts and castles are planted at intervals all round the outer margin of the two great harbours, which all but encircle it; while those of St. Elmo and St. Angelo, placed at the

mouth of the main harbour, look out upon the sea, and threaten with instant and inevitable destruction any hostile ship that should attempt to pass between their iron teeth. Although modern military science has immensely strengthened the defences of this remarkable place, there is enough of its original condition remaining to show that L'Isle Adam, La Valette, and Vignacourt, the "three mighties," whose names stand out the most conspicuous in its history, were men of no common kind. The ancient palaces of the knights, the Auberge Castile, Auberge François, Auberge D'Allemand, &c., &c., in which the knights of these several countries dwelt of old, are now barracks for the British officers, and public offices of the government.

One of the chief sights of the city is the church of St. John the Baptist, the burial place of the knights, whose 400 tombstones, covered with beautiful Mosaic, constitute the entire floor of the church. Each of these Mosaics records the name, lineage, character, and deeds of the knight who sleeps beneath it. The roof and walls are very gorgeous, gilding and frescoes being their chief decorations. There is in one of the side chapels a rather fine picture, by Caravaggio, of the decollation of John the Baptist. The priests who were officiating in the church were coarse, vulgar-looking men, with faces equally mean and meaningless. After a long and toilsome day spent in sight-seeing, we returned late at night to the yacht. On the way to our floating home we visited the Baracca, the loftiest and finest point of view in Valetta. The moon, within two or three days of the full, was shining in cloudless splendour. The tall castles, and towers, and lofty buildings encircling the great harbour, all built of the white Maltese stone, gleamed brightly out from the dark shadows above which they rose. At the harbour mouth, and away beyond it, the rippling sea shone like a quivering sheet of silver. Nearer at hand, in the inner reaches of the beautiful bay, were the massive forms of the men-of-war, motionless and silent as death. As Canning, speaking of England's navy in a time of peace, once beautifully said,

they lay "sleeping upon their shadows," but ready in a moment "to ruffle out their pinions, and to awake their thunders." It was such a scene as stamps itself ineffaceably upon the mind.

Meanwhile, our dear boy, whose disabled limb deprived him, for this time at least, of even a glimpse of this picturesque and beautiful place, was visited day by day, by the eminent and amiable medical practitioner to whom we had committed the case. We were not to sail till he should pronounce it safe for his patient to do so. At length, on Tuesday morning, the 7th of April, he gave his final judgment. The leg, he was now quite convinced, was not broken, but only severely bruised, and we might sail when we pleased; Laurence, he assured us, would be able to limp about a little, and at least, to ride one of the famous Egyptian donkeys, by the time we got to Alexandria. Orders were immediately given to make ready for sea. The damage done by the storm had been all, meanwhile, repaired. By ten A.M., our fresh stores for the voyage were all on board. The anchor was already up, and the *St. Ursula* was hanging on at the moorings, when the last of the party who had gone ashore returned. The wind was at N.W.—fair for leaving the harbour. The word to cast off was given. Her head sails were run up; they filled at once, and paid her off, and we were instantly under weigh. Our Maltese shore-boatman, Bubbly Joe—a nick-name, descriptive, I presume, of the strange gubble which constituted his ordinary speech—was the last to leave us. His boat hung on in our wake till we had passed the custom-house, when he babbled his adieus. Five minutes more, and now catching the breeze in greater force as we got farther out from the overhanging wall of rock on which Valetta stands, we rushed out through the narrow opening, little more than a hundred yards wide, between Forts St. Elmo and St. Angelo, and were again upon the open main.

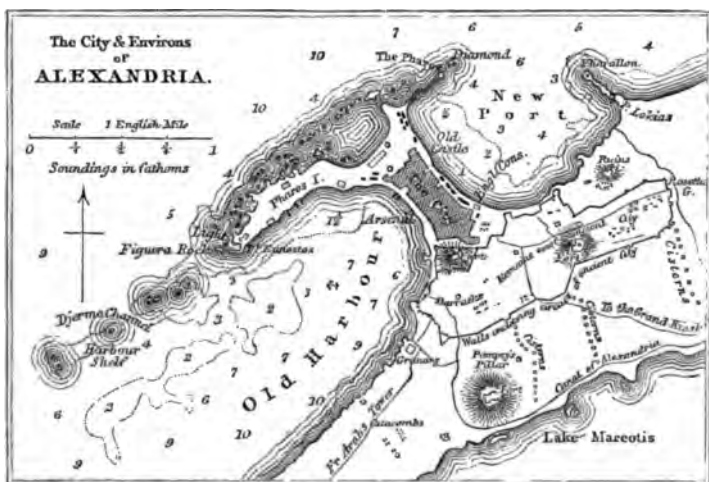
Our voyage to Alexandria was most agreeable throughout. The wind, it is true, was generally much too light for great speed; but it was always fine. For the most part it was suf-




ficient to temper the heat, even at noon; and when the sun set at one extremity of the horizon, the moon was already rising up out of the sea at the other, and turning night itself into day. In the course of the first two days we made about 400 miles. Subsequently the wind fell so much that our progress became considerably slower. Save the smoke of a solitary steamer, far away in the distance, we had seen nothing moving on the face of the waters since we left Malta. The sea, the sky, and our gallant ship made up, for the time, our entire world—and a very pleasant little world it was. In such balmy air mere existence was an enjoyment. The lofty wall of canvas, stretching from the main boom up to the peak of the gaff-topsail, a height of eighty or ninety feet, afforded an unfailing shade, where the well-stuffed cork cushions—life-preservers in disguise—were arranged during the heat of the day, and where more or fewer of the party on board were usually grouped together, reading, writing, and talking by turns. Sometimes during a whole day it was not necessary to shift a single sail; and the ship glided so gently and noiselessly along, that often it was only by looking over her bows, and seeing her sharp cutwater cleaving the sapphire-like sea, that we became satisfied she was not standing still.

We had hoped to reach Alexandria by the end of the week, but it was late in the afternoon of the Sabbath before we sighted the Egyptian coast. The first object that came into view, rising above the low sandy shore, was the Arab Tower—a well-known landmark in approaching Alexandria, and on which we found ourselves steering as directly down as if we had been a railway train running into a station. About six p.m., we could make out with difficulty Pompey's pillar and the lighthouse. It was now apparent, however, that we must lay our account with passing the night at sea. After sunset no pilot will come off to take a vessel into the harbour of Alexandria; and there was no seaman on board familiar enough with its numerous reefs and shoals to make it safe for us to venture into it in the dark.

We kept standing off and on, accordingly, till the next day dawned. Alexandria has two harbours, the new and the old, formed by a neck of land that runs out at right angles from the shore, and then stretches away right and left like the straight line that forms the top of the letter T. At the one extremity of this cross line stood the celebrated Pharos, which lighted the entrance into the eastern harbour; and at the other stands the modern lighthouse, pointing the way into the western harbour, which is the one now chiefly used. The eastern harbour, though it bears the name of the *new port*, is really the old or original harbour of the place. The misnomer has arisen out of the circumstance that, after being for a long time abandoned, it came again into use. To make the misnomer more complete, the eastern harbour has been abandoned once more; and the so-called *old* harbour is the main harbour of the present day.



The city itself, as the annexed map will show, occupies the stalk of the supposed letter T, and lies therefore between the two harbours—a position which gives it the full advantage of



the sea breeze, whether the wind be coming from the east or from the west. To this cause, no doubt, is to be ascribed the comparative coolness of the air at Alexandria, even in the height of summer. Having scarcely a breath of wind to help us on, our progress, as we approached the harbour, was extremely slow. The channel leading into it is commanded by Fort Marabout, built on a small island about half a mile from the shore. From this point the distance is about three or four miles to the inner extremity of the harbour. The channel is very narrow, hemmed in as it is between this island on the one side, and a long line of reefs on the side towards the sea. A pilot came alongside as we neared the entrance, eager to offer his services; but with the advantage of daylight and a good chart, Mr. Cairney felt no need of him, and we reached our anchorage in perfect safety.

There is nothing very imposing in the scene that presents itself in entering the harbour. The flat sandy shore is featureless and bare. A little farther on it is surmounted by a long line of windmills, which, however useful they may be, have certainly nothing about them of the beautiful or picturesque. Nearer the city still, and on the seaward side of the harbour, is the marine palace of the Pasha—a large and handsome edifice in the light Italian style. Beyond it is the naval arsenal, in front of which lie the hulks of the battered and broken ships of Navarino. Farther on, the crowded city itself begins, enveloping the whole upper end of the bay. The harbour was full of shipping of all sizes and kinds, from Egyptian, Greek, and English men-of-war, to the light felucca, with its long lateen sails and its Arab crew, fresh from the Nile, the Canopic or western branch of which enters the sea some twenty miles or so east of Alexandria.

We had scarcely come to an anchor, when Dr. O——, a Scotch medical gentleman, stepped on board to pay his respects to Mr. Tennent, who had visited Alexandria in the *St. Ursula* the year before. It had disappointed us much to find that the five

days we had spent on the voyage from Malta, had done so little for our youthful patient, who was as incapable of using or even moving his limb as ever. The mystery, however, was at once explained, when Dr. O——, who proceeded instantly to examine it, pronounced it to be a case of positive fracture. The means he took to satisfy himself as to the real state of matters, made it abundantly manifest that the shin-bone had been broken about midway between the ankle and the knee. The carpenter was immediately summoned, splints were extemporized on the spot, and the limb was made all safe till the doctor should have time to procure the proper appliances. In the course of the same day it was carefully set and bandaged. Arrangements were at the same time made, by which the little fellow could be easily hoisted on deck through the skylight of the saloon by the ready hands of the kind-hearted sailors, with whom he was an especial favourite. The swollen state of the limb, and the too great reluctance of the Malta doctor to give the boy pain by handling it roughly, had no doubt led to the mistake as to the nature of the injury the limb had sustained. It was fortunate the fracture was discovered in time. Had we been detained a few days longer on the voyage to Alexandria, lameness for life to the sufferer might have been the consequence.

We landed early in the forenoon, and proceeded to make the tour of the town. The suburb through which we entered it, was wretched and filthy in the extreme; the streets narrow and unpaved; the houses mean; the people seemingly very poor, and the smells disgusting. As we emerged into the more open thoroughfares in the interior of the city, the crowd was prodigious, and the confused noise was overwhelming. The streets were thronged with a multitudinous mass of beasts and men. There were camels, horses, and donkeys, sheep and goats. There were Jews, Greeks, Italians, Copts, Negroes, Moors, Syrians, Turks, French, and English. Donkey-drivers in dozens immediately surrounded us, importuning us to engage their active little beasts, which it is quite a pleasure to ride. They get along

at a smart canter, the driver running behind, urging the donkey right through the heart of the crowd, shouting "Riggel-aak"—that is, take care of your leg—at every step, and never slacking his pace till he has brought you to the point you wished to reach. Nothing surprised us more than the number and the elegance of the private carriages that were moving about in all directions—many of them with running footmen, coursing along in front to clear the way. The finest part of the city is the great square—a large open space, surrounded with handsome buildings, among which are the French consulate, several large hotels, and the chief Frankish residences and places of business. The English church, a beautiful structure in a mixed style of architecture, partly Egyptian and partly European, stands at the corner of the square.

From the roof of one of the loftiest houses in the square, we had an excellent *coup d'œil* of the whole city, and of the two bays between which it lies—from the Pharos at the seaward extremity of the one, to the modern lighthouse at the corresponding extremity of the other. From this elevation we had, at the same time, a fine view of the palm groves on the south, or land side of the city and beyond these, of the shallow but far-reaching Lake Mareotis. The Greek church is in the neighbourhood of this square, and is reckoned the handsomest, as it is certainly the largest, ecclesiastical edifice in the city. The interior was of course full of pictures, among which that of the *Μητρὶς Θεοῦ*—Mother of God—occupied the most conspicuous place. Mariolatry is nearly as well established in the Greek as in the Latin Church. In the course of the day we drove round the environs of the city. Our first visit was to Pompey's pillar, which stands at the distance of nearly a mile from the modern city, though in the midst of mounds which cover the ruins of the old one. The way to it led us through fine gardens and groves of palms, on which the young dates were just beginning to form. The pillar itself, which is about 100 feet in height, stands on an eminence, from which there is an extensive view of Lake Mareotis. The place

was rendered all but odious by the crowd of beggars that infested it, and whose importunities were equally incessant and impudent. From this point we rode for a mile or two along the banks of the famous Mahmoudieh Canal, which extends from Alexandria to Atfeh on the Nile, a distance of forty miles. It resembles a gigantic ditch, buried between high banks of mud. It was all astir, however, with the ceaseless traffic which pours along its waters. Large passenger-boats full of people, and other boats, of all sizes, laden with corn, cotton, and other kinds of Egyptian produce were moving along—some towed by men, some propelled by oars, and others by the afternoon breeze, which filled their huge lateen sails, and sped them on at the rate of four or five miles an hour.

The canal is lined on the side next to the city, with smart villas, chiefly belonging to the Franks. The day being Easter-Monday, it was a holiday with all, save the Moslems; and the road along the canal being the favourite ride of the Alexandrians, the scene was of the gayest possible kind. Carriages, horses, and donkeys, were all in requisition, and in many places the thoroughfare was so thronged, that it was difficult to make our way through the crowd. This was especially the case near the gardens of Moharrum Bey, which though they are private property, their owner has kindly thrown open to the public. The collection they contain of plants and flowers, though not very tastefully arranged, is rather extensive, and very grateful to the eye, as all vegetation is, in an unusual degree, in this sun-burned land.

From these gardens we proceeded to a large, open, desolate-looking plain, outside of the Rosetta Gate. It is the scene of the great victory of Augustus Cæsar over the partisans of Mark Antony. The only remains of antiquity on which we lighted were two statues, a male and a female, of colossal magnitude. They lay prostrate and mutilated, like everything else in Egypt, and like Egypt itself, which, in the language of Scripture, has truly become "the basest of kingdoms." Re-entering the city

by the Rosetta Gate, and through the midst of the fortifications which guard it on the land side, we reached the point on the eastern harbour, where one of Cleopatra's needles still stands erect—a fine obelisk of granite, about seventy feet in height, and seven and a half feet square at the base. The fellow of this obelisk lies half buried in the sand, at the distance of thirty or forty yards. This latter is the one which Mohammed Ali made a present of to the British Government to commemorate their Egyptian victories over Bonaparte and the French fleet and army in 1798 and 1801, but which has never been removed. Britain is quite content with the fact of having gained a victory—most unlike in this respect to France, which is never satisfied unless she have the trophies of her victories set up in the streets and squares of Paris.

Near this interesting spot stood the Cæsareum, the temple built in honour of the Cæsars, and which was reared, as is supposed, on the site of the famous library that was burned by accident in the wars between Cæsar and Antony, when 400,000 volumes were destroyed—the greatest loss that literature ever sustained. There is a round tower overhanging the sea, alongside of the needle, which is thought by those best acquainted with the antiquities of Alexandria to have been part of the Cæsareum. I regretted much not having time to take a boat and to go round to examine it. But even from the parapet above, many courses of solid masonry of a decidedly Roman character, could be distinctly traced. A little farther on, and close by the shore of the same eastern harbour, stands the convent of St. Mark, the only Coptic church, so far as I could learn, in Alexandria. The low, mean-looking entrance gate leads into a small quadrangle, around which are the crazy apartments of the convent; and beyond it is the place of worship—small, dingy and dark, and much more resembling a barn than a Christian church. The evening service was going on at the time we entered. The officiating priest occupied a small pulpit, elevated only a few feet above the ground. Around him stood the congregation,

consisting of sixteen or eighteen persons, all males. Those nearest to him held lights in their hands to enable him to read the service. He chaunted it, in the Arabic language, in a low, plaintive, melancholy tone, not unlike some of the cadences of the Gaelic psalmody of our own northern Highlands. At certain parts of the service, all present joined in a confused hum. Portions of the service were read by a youth, not more than twelve years of age, and who evidently was no great proficient—the priest having frequently to put him right. The accommodation for females was concealed by a screen or lattice, but I rather think that none were present. In a small aisle in the back part of the little church we were shown the tomb of the Apostle Mark, surmounted by a sorry picture of that reputed founder of the Alexandrian Church. And this was all that remained to represent it! There was something, in this view, singularly touching in the sight of this handful of poor people, gathered together in the dusk of the evening, in this decayed and miserable building, celebrating their worship almost in the dark—a state of things, it is to be feared, but too emblematic of their own religious ignorance, and of the ruinous condition of the once renowned and flourishing Alexandrian Church.

In Cairo the Coptic Christians are greatly more numerous, amounting there, it is said, to nearly 20,000. The whole number in Egypt is estimated at 80,000, and they are scattered over the entire face of the country, from the sea coast of the Mediterranean up to Assouan, on the borders of the Nubian desert. A revival of Divine light and life in the Coptic Church, would therefore be still a great event for Egypt. Their own tongue is a dead language. Their priests are taught to read it, but it is believed that few of them really understand it. Were such a work done for the Coptic Church in Egypt, as the noble American missions seem to be in the act, under God, of accomplishing for the Nestorian and Armenian Churches in Asia Minor, a light would be kindled that ere long might be blessed to illumine the whole dark valley of the Nile.

The yacht's boat was waiting for us near the custom-house, on our return to the harbour, and pushed off immediately with all the party save Mr. Grant Brown and myself. He and I hastened back into the city to make some arrangements with the doctor about our little patient. The daylight was fast fading away, and there was no time to be lost, as the gates of the city would be shut in half-an-hour. Having procured a couple of donkeys, we cantered away through the narrow and winding streets, followed as usual by the owner of the beasts running at full speed. By the time our interview with the doctor was over, it had become quite dark, and as the streets are entirely unlighted, and as the native shops were all shut, we had to pick our way with no little caution through the heaps of rubbish and stones which in many places beset our path. At length we got into what seemed a tolerably smooth street, and were pressing on at a gallop, when suddenly my poor donkey went headlong into a hole in the very middle of the street—a hole big enough to bury both the donkey and myself. Fortunately I sustained no injury, and when I had got to my legs, I found my donkey literally in its owner's arms. With its fore-feet lifted and drawn round his waist, he was feeling it all over with the utmost solicitude, and pouring out, in his copious Arabic, a torrent of affection for his beast, but giving himself no sort of concern about its luckless rider. Handing the fellow his hire, we ran on towards the gate, and got out just when the guard was in the act of shutting it. Shore-boats in dozens were lying about fifty yards from the wharf, but though we shouted to their crews till we were tired, not one of them would stir. It is difficult to get Arabs to do anything after nightfall; and there are possibly at Alexandria harbour regulations that forbid them to unmoor their boats after a certain hour. At last some English sailors heard us, and rowed to the point where we stood, supposing us to be their own officers for whom they were waiting. While parleying with them, we heard the shout of our own yachtsmen, who had missed the place where we had appointed to meet them,

and were groping their way round the harbour through the thicket of boats and shipping, and doing their best to find us. Our prompt response soon guided them to the spot where we stood, and we were not sorry to be extricated from our somewhat awkward position. Robberies and even murders are by no means unusual at night in the dark streets of Alexandria.

On the second day thereafter, Wednesday, the 15th April, we landed at half-past seven A.M., to proceed by rail to Cairo. As we trotted along, on our clever little donkeys, from the shore to the railway terminus, on the land side of the city, we were all the while surrounded by a perfect Babel of donkey and camel drivers, shouting at the top of their voices, and urging on their beasts, laden with boxes and packages of all sorts and sizes, and pouring on in one confused mass towards the iron-road to the capital of Egypt. As a specimen of the want of mechanical skill, and of the waste of human strength so common in Egypt, we saw about 200 men dragging, by main force, an engine boiler upon a clumsy frame of wood, without wheels or rollers, or any contrivance whatever to diminish the friction. In striking contrast with this unscientific barbarism, stood, in the immediate neighbourhood, the railway terminus, thoroughly European in its whole structure and arrangement, and within the station, the locomotive engine, that marvellous machine of giant strength and more than race-horse speed, yoked to its long train of cars. Of the heterogeneous mass of passengers preparing for the journey, not the least noticeable section consisted of pilgrims on their way to Mecca. Not fewer than forty trucks were filled with these devotees of Moslemism. Most of them had come by sea from European and Asiatic Turkey, and were proceeding to join the great caravan at Cairo, and thence to take their way through the desert to the city of their false prophet. One would think it hardly possible but that some impression in favour of, at least, the intellectual superiority of the Christian races, must be made on the Moslem mind, by such a spectacle as the one we were looking on. The more cultivated

Moslems, one would suppose, must surely be learning to think better than their forefathers did, of a religion whose followers are so evidently at the head of all that belongs to modern intelligence and civilization, whether in arts or arms. Not, indeed, that mere secular science ever will or can reform the world. Nothing but the Word and Spirit of God have power to liberate fallen man from error and sin. It is surely, however, nowise inconsistent with this fundamental truth, that even secular science should have some place and some function in connection with the bringing on of that ultimate triumph of Christianity, which the Bible teaches us to anticipate, and for which it invites us to labour and to pray. Science may be, and no doubt it is, unsettling the foundations of idolatry and superstition, and thereby conducing to their final fall, though it cannot set up the only true and saving faith in their stead. It may help to break down, though it cannot build up. Though it cannot supply the divine knowledge that makes men wise unto salvation, it is undoubtedly at this very moment, laying down and multiplying the highways by which ultimately "many shall run to and fro" to spread that knowledge abroad over the face of the whole earth.

The railway carriages were English-built, and exceedingly commodious; and the guards, drivers, and other officials along the line seemed to be mostly British. The distance by railway, from Alexandria to Cairo, is about 140 miles. To understand the course of the line, it is necessary to remember that the Delta, which constitutes the greater part of Lower Egypt, is a large triangle, whose base is the sea, and whose converging sides are inclosed by the two main streams into which the Nile divides at a short distance below Cairo. Of these two branches of the great river of Egypt, that which flows along the western side of the Delta enters the sea below Rosetta, about twenty-five miles to the east of Alexandria, while the other branch enters the sea near Damietta, about eighty miles farther east still. Cairo is situated on the eastern side of the main stream of the Nile, above the point where the river divides and the

Delta begins. Alexandria, on the other hand, is outside of the Delta, on the margin of the great Libyan Desert, which stretches away westwards from the Nile, along the African shore. As both the population and the produce of Lower Egypt are chiefly to be found within the Delta, the railway naturally follows the route that brings it into contact with these great sources of its traffic. It runs accordingly in a south-easterly direction from Alexandria, towards the western branch of the Nile, which it crosses at Kafr Sayat; proceeding all along, thus far, at no great distance from the Mahmoudieh Canal. From this point it traverses the Delta diagonally, till it meets the eastern or Damietta branch of the Nile, and crossing this eastern arm of the river, it turns southward along the right or eastern bank, till it reaches the terminus in the environs of Cairo. The Delta, including the belts of country outside of it that are irrigated by the two branches of the Nile, contains 4500 square miles of arable land; which is more than double the amount of all the rest of the arable land in Egypt.

For several miles after leaving Alexandria the railway skirts the Lake Mareotis, whose shores are literally whitened with the saline deposit which the lake when low, as it was at the time we passed it, leaves behind. The vegetation in this neighbourhood is meagre and scrubby, but improves as the line approaches the Nile. Within the Delta the land is rich, and the crops seemed to be everywhere abundant. There are no hedges or fences of any kind, so that the country is one vast unbroken, slightly undulating plain. The fields are well squared, and the tillage good. Every inch of ground appears to be assiduously cultivated. Wheat, lentils, barley, maize, millet, beans, lupins, and tobacco, seemed to be the principal crops. The wheat and beans were all but ready for the sickle, and farther up the country the harvest was going on. The villages are mere clusters of mud-built hovels, scarcely the height of a man, with a hole in the side to creep in at, and with roofs strongly resembling dunghills. Many of the children—even

those of from eight to twelve years of age—were running about stark naked. Oxen and buffaloes are chiefly used for draught, donkeys and camels for burden; sheep and goats were numerous in the fields. Of birds, the ibis, resembling not a little, at a distance, our sea-gull, was much the most common. This bird wants the long bill of the ibis held sacred among the ancient Egyptians. The representatives of that species are said to be found now only in Abyssinia.

The chief town we passed within the Delta was Tanta, which is said to contain about 30,000 inhabitants. A great annual fair is held in this place, at which merchandise from all parts of Egypt is sold, and where, in honour of a Moslem saint, the Saïd-el-Beddawa, abominations are practised, rivalling the worst that is told of the ancient heathen mysteries. It is not improbable, indeed, that from these they derived their real origin. There seems reason to believe that Tanta may have been the site of Busiris, a city in which the Egyptian Isis, the Ceres of the Greeks, had a temple to which tens of thousands resorted, and where all manner of polluting rites were practised. We had left Alexandria at nine o'clock in the morning, and it was near seven in the evening when we arrived at Cairo. A friend who had been made aware of our coming, had a carriage waiting for us, and in less than a quarter of an hour we were comfortably established in the Hotel d'Orient.

Our time being limited, we were afoot early next morning, and soon after six o'clock, we set off in an open carriage to take a survey of the environs of the city. The road we took led us past the railway terminus, near to which hundreds of camels were assembled—the ships of the desert—waiting to transport British merchandise across the desert to Suez, or Moslem pilgrims to Mecca. A little farther on we entered a fine avenue of sycamores, which afforded us, for several miles, a delightful shade. As we drove along this avenue we came suddenly upon the banks of the Nile. A long reach of the noble stream was before us, and away beyond it, ten or twelve miles from where

we stood, the great pyramids of Ghizeh shone brightly in the morning sun. A mile or two farther on we reached the Shoobra gardens, in the midst of which is a beautiful palace of the Pasha. The gardens are very extensive; the walks and flowerbeds kept with English neatness and care; and the collection of plants, and fruits, and flowers exhibited almost every variety to be found in the sheltered greenhouses and hothouses of our more ungenial clime.

The garden palace is a large quadrangular building, of a single story in height. A broad flight of steps, surmounted by a handsome façade of polished alabaster columns, leads up to the entrance. But the most elaborate decorations have been reserved for the interior. All round the immense square which the building incloses, there runs an open corridor, supported by finely carved and polished alabaster columns. The side wall and roof of this corridor are painted with frescoes. The chief apartments are at the four angles of the square, and are fitted up with all the refinement and elegance of modern art, like the finest saloons of London or Paris. The furniture and ornaments are all European, apparently French and Italian. The centre of the square is a vast marble basin, which can at any time be filled with water and converted into a lake or mimic sea. It has islands, too, here and there, bright with the gayest flowers; and there are gilded boats ready to navigate those placid waters. It is, in short, a paradise of pleasure—a true Mohammedan elysium—where there is everything to feast the eye and gratify the sense. But one cannot look on the costly magnificence which the ruler of Egypt has lavished upon this toy, without thinking of the miserable mud-huts of his wretched subjects, and without remembering that the riches squandered with such prodigal freedom here is wrung by a system of merciless tyranny from the hands of an oppressed and degraded people.

On returning to the city we drove through its principal streets, several of which are roofed over. These are the bazaars, where trade is chiefly carried on, and which are always

crowded with people. In order to obtain a complete and comprehensive view of the city, and of the country around it, we ascended to the citadel. It stands on a height at the southern extremity of the city, and is crowned with the great mosque of Mohammed Ali, begun long ago by that vigorous Pasha, and destined to perpetuate his name and fame. It is the Moslem St. Peter's of Cairo. The other mosques, large as several of them are, sink into comparative insignificance in view of this stupendous edifice. Its chief features externally, and at a distance, are its lofty and capacious dome, flanked by two very tall and somewhat slender minarets, which everywhere meet the eye. We were required to put on white cotton slippers over our boots, in order to be permitted to tread its sacred courts. On passing the outer gate, the visitor finds himself in a spacious court, with a piazza running all round it, and a beautiful fountain in the centre; the fountain and the piazza being all of polished Egyptian marble. The mosque is entered from one side of this court. It was full of workmen, the interior being still incomplete. The decorations of the inner surface of the great central dome, and of the two smaller side domes, had all, however, been finished, and were exceedingly rich and beautiful. The colours with which they are ornamented are chiefly green, brown, red, and gold. There are several rows of circular windows filled with stained glass, that run round the domes, and which give a very pleasing effect. The huge central dome is supported from the floor by four immense piers, cased with polished alabaster elaborately carved. The tomb of Ali, the founder of the mosque, stands in one of the recesses of the building, and resembles a small chapel. We were allowed to examine everything without the least interference or interruption. The cost of the building must have been enormous. Far more interesting, however, than this mighty mosque is the view from the battlements of the citadel around it. Save in Palestine itself, more impressive and suggestive sights are nowhere else to be seen on the face of the earth.

Let us glance at the glorious panorama that lies beneath and around us. First, and lying at our very feet, is Cairo itself, the



city of the Caliphs—with its countless minarets, its crowded mass of buildings, and intersecting streets in the centre; its gay white palaces embowered in palm groves, stretching away out into the suburbs, and covering altogether an area of many miles. We are standing at the southern extremity of the city, on one of the last and lowest spurs of the long range of the Mokattam Hills, which, running nearly due south from Cairo, forms the great wall that bounds on the east, from this point upwards, the valley of the Nile. On this southern side of the city, we are on the very verge of the desert, which begins close beside us, at the north end of the Mokattam Hills, and reaches on, unbroken, in a south-easterly direction, to the shores of the Red Sea. Turning to the north, and looking across the city, which slopes away down from the citadel, and spreads out on the level plain below, we have a vast expanse of rich cultivated land, extending far farther than the eye can reach. North-east from the city lies the Goshen, assigned to ancient Israel, still clothed with an exuberant vegetation. In the same direction, and not

more than six or seven miles from Cairo, the eye lights on the spot where stood of old that On or Heliopolis, the far-famed city of the sun, the daughter of whose high-priest became the wife of Joseph. Some traces of the temple still remain. There is a pool of water with a few willows drooping over it;—that pool was the spring or fountain of the sun. There is a solitary obelisk rising amid ruins, and surrounded by garden shrubs that have been growing wild for ages. That obelisk, and another, the base of which alone remains, confronted the ancient temple of On; and there it has stood for well nigh four thousand years. It was there when Abraham came down into Egypt, to escape the famine that desolated Canaan. It may have been beneath its shadow that Joseph first beheld his future wife, Asenath, the daughter of the high-priest. Often must Moses have stood beside it, when, at a later time, another high-priest of the same temple became his teacher in all the wisdom of Egypt. Herodotus, the father of history, makes mention of its existence; so that it was already old before any other history than that which the Bible contains had yet been written. Plato, the greatest of the sages of ancient Greece, made a pilgrimage to see it. It has outlived the dynasties of the Pharaohs, the Ptolemies, and the Cæsars, and bids fair to survive that of the Mohammeds too. Who can tell whether it may not yet witness the rise of another Heliopolis—the temple of a better sun, even of the Sun of Righteousness—whom even Egypt shall yet know and reverence as the true Light of the world!

And now let us turn to the west. It is the valley of the Nile that lies before us; and it is here, properly speaking, the valley may be said to begin. From Cairo upwards, Egypt is confined to the hollow down which the Nile flows, between the Mokattam and Libyan Hills—a strip of the finest verdure running through the midst of a sterile wilderness. At Cairo the Mokattam range, the eastern boundary of this long valley, sinks down to the plain. On the western or opposite side of the valley, the Libyan range begins here also to recede farther

from the river. Below Cairo the country, in consequence, opens out into the broad expanse of the Delta, which is inclosed and fertilized by the two main streams into which the Nile divides. At the point, therefore, where we are now standing, we are looking, so to speak, across the mouth of the valley. Higher up the country, the hills by which the valley is hemmed in approach in many places almost to the very margin of the stream, but here the space between them is not less than ten or twelve miles. The whole extent of this broad basin is clothed with the richest vegetation. Down through it at the distance of three or four miles west from Cairo, we see the Nile gliding majestically along, watering the soil, which, in the course of ages, itself has brought down, and giving birth to all the fertility and fruitfulness which belong to the land of Egypt. On its farther or western side, the eye rests on a palm forest which stretches away southwards along the river for many miles. A short way beyond that forest stood the great city of Memphis—Milton's "populous No"—one of the great capitals of ancient Egypt, and the residence of the Pharaohs at the time of the Hebrew Exodus. From that city, "Busiris and his Memphian chivalry" went forth in pursuit of Israel, and perished in the Red Sea. The city must have occupied a great part of the entire space from the banks of the river to the base of the Libyan Hills. In the face of these low limestone hills, over which, from the dreary table-land to which they rise, the sands of the Libyan Desert are continually pouring down, were the great cemeteries of Memphis, the necropolis of its multitudinous population. On the brow of these hills still stand the pyramids, the gigantic tombs of its ancient kings, who were thus lifted up, even in death, above the mortal remains of the mouldering masses around them. There are four groups of these pyramids. Farthest up the Nile, those of Dashoor; next, those of Sak-kara; then those of Abousir; and last, those of Ghizeh, which are nearly south-west from Cairo. The distance from the pyramids of Dashoor to those of Ghizeh is upwards of twenty miles.

The last named are, by way of eminence, "the pyramids," being by far the largest and loftiest of the whole series. We were now viewing them afar off, but we had already arranged to see them nearer at hand. That same night we were to sleep beneath their shadows, and we were already impatient to be on the way.

At two P.M. our preparations for the excursion were complete. There is a tolerable road to Old Cairo on the bank of the Nile, a distance of nearly four miles; and to save both time and fatigue we took a carriage thus far, having sent on before us the donkeys that were to carry us over the rest of the journey. We had with us three tents, one for the two ladies and the others for the four gentlemen who composed the party. The landlady of the hotel had furnished the needful commissariat, and we were all in high spirits—in the best possible humour for enjoying the expedition. Although the railway has diminished the importance of Old Cairo, by turning a large portion both of the passenger and goods traffic away from it altogether, it is still a bustling place, being, as it is, the river port of Cairo. At three P.M. we embarked on the broad bosom of the Nile. The wind was from the west; and, what with beating against it and tacking to get round the island of Rhoda, which lies towards the western side of the stream, it was a complete hour before we had got across and were fairly *en route* on the farther side.

The island of Rhoda, now mentioned, is doubly famous; first, as lying opposite that part of the bank of the river where, according to tradition, the daughter of Pharaoh found the infant Moses; and next, as having upon it the Nilometer, the well-known instrument by which the rise of the river is measured at the time of the inundation. The road, westwards from the village of Ghizeh, at which we landed, is a mere bridle path, or narrow track, which winds through palm groves and along the margin of fields in crop, and where we could proceed only in single file, and at the modest pace of three or four miles an hour. Right before us, and now full in view, rose the great

pyramids, a sufficient land-mark to guide us across the plain. As we rode on we quite realized what seems to be the common experience of all who visit them, that, instead of bulking more as they are approached, they seem rather to grow less. They looked quite as imposing when seen from the citadel of Cairo as now, when they were at a distance of only two or three miles. It is no doubt to their enormous size this result is to be ascribed. The impression one receives of their magnitude from the first far-off view is so strong, that no second look, though taken much nearer at hand, seems to add to its force. It is only, however, when we have actually reached their base, or when climbing up their mountain sides, that we get an adequate conception of their stupendous size. The entire area of my old parish, that of the Tron or St. Mary's, in the city of Glasgow, of which I was minister for many years, would do no more than afford standing ground for the pyramid of Cheops, to which we were now rapidly drawing near. Every inch of its area of twelve acres would be covered by the base of that prodigious pile.

About half-past five o'clock we had gained the outer edge of the cultivated plain, and found ourselves getting, all at once, into the desert. Between the one and the other there is a margin of debateable ground, where life and death—the Nile with its fertilizing flood, and the desert with its drought and desolation—contend with one another for the mastery, and where now the one and now the other appears to triumph.

Here there is an Arab village, whose inhabitants claim to be the guides of all who visit the pyramids. Our approach having been first signalled by the dogs, a whole troop of which came barking out to greet us, they were immediately followed by some twenty or thirty bare-legged and bare-headed Arabs, clad in their white or blue blouses, their only garment, and all eager to be employed. Though we declined their services, they followed us in a body, jabbering broken sentences of all sorts of tongues, Italian, French, German, and English, interlarded of course with abundance of Arabic. About half a mile beyond

the village, our donkeys sinking meanwhile to the fetlocks at every step in the soft shifting sand, we came to the foot of the low limestone hills which bound the plain, and the face of which, in most places, was covered with loose sand. Dismounting from our donkeys, we advanced up the ascent, at the top of which the pyramids stand. This ascent is, so to speak, the grand substruction wall which nature has provided for these mightiest of all sepulchral monuments, affording them both a solid basis on which to rest, and so lifting them at the same time above the subjacent plain as to bring their entire mass into view.

The sun was now rapidly declining towards the west, and there was no time to be lost. The two ladies, Mr. Stevenson, and myself having resolved on the ascent, we set ourselves immediately to the somewhat arduous task of mounting the pyramid of Cheops. Whether we would or no, three or four of the Arabs attached themselves to each individual of the climbing party. The blocks of stone which form the successive courses of the huge structure are, in many cases, three feet in height—a truly formidable staircase. What with the incessant shouting of the Arabs, their wild cries, their quarrelling with one another about the possession of our persons, their clamorous entreaties for *bukshesh* as often as a pause was made in the ascent, and all this taking place three or four hundred feet up in the air, with only a narrow ledge of stone to stand upon, and the side of the great pyramid sloping rapidly down to the desert beneath, where those we had left at its base seemed little more than mere specks moving about on the face of the yellow sand, it would certainly have been nothing to wonder at if the ladies had felt their nerves a little shaken. To their honour be it told, however, they never flinched or faltered for a moment; and in twelve minutes from the time we left the ground we stood on the summit of the loftiest of the Egyptian pyramids, a height of 479 feet. The volatile Arabs, as much excited as if they had been drinking champagne, danced about on the narrow top of the pyramid, a

space of about twenty feet square, and shrieked like madmen by way of getting up in our honour a true English hurrah! It was only by threatening not to give them a single farthing that we at length succeeded in getting them to be quiet, and to allow us to survey and to enjoy undisturbed the singular and striking scene that lay far and wide around us.

The sun was now approaching the horizon, throwing his level rays across the broad expanse of the Libyan Desert, and sending the long shadows of the mighty pyramids far down upon the valley of the Nile. Southward the successive groups of pyramids we had seen at noon from the citadel of Cairo were all in view, ranged along the elevated margin of the great Nile valley, and standing solemn and awful, like gigantic sentinels, on the frontier of that vast domain of desolation and death that stretches away behind them. Eastward lay the Nile valley itself, green as an emerald, reaching from the base of the pyramids away over to the Mokattam Hills. The plain, while we were looking on it, sunk all into shadow as the sun was going down, though his latest beams were still gleaming from the domes, and minarets, and towers of the citadel of Cairo, and gilding the long range of the hills beyond it. Immediately beside us was the twin pyramid to that of Cheops, nearly of the same height, with several smaller ones grouped around. In front of them all, as if marking the grand approach from the plain below to this burying-place of the kings, stood the ponderous form of the sphinx. Colossal though it be, it looked a comparatively diminutive thing as seen from an elevation of nearly 500 feet. All round the pyramids there are numerous walled inclosures, some of them of great extent, and the general outline of which can be distinctly traced as thus seen from above. Everywhere, however, the drifting sands of the desert have succeeded in half burying these ruins. It is only the larger and loftier of them, indeed, that peer out from the sand wreaths, which, when the strong wind of the desert is abroad, sweep along like the snow-drift, and have all but covered with their arid winding-sheet these places of the dead.

It is in some respects more trying to come down the pyramid than to ascend it. In jumping from one step to another, if one were not held back by the Arabs, there would be some risk of gathering too much way, and going headlong to the bottom. We made the descent, however, with perfect safety ; and were glad to find that, meanwhile, our Arab attendants from Cairo had pitched our tents in a sheltered hollow, selected by Mr. Brown, about half-way between the sphinx, and the pyramid of Cheops. The donkeys and their drivers were soon after very comfortably housed in one of the large adjacent tombs hewn out in the face of the rock. Our evening meal over, we sat down together at the door of one of the tents, and raised our evening song of praise. The Arabs who had been dancing and making merry in their sepulchral domicile, ceased when they heard the sound of our psalm, and, gathering around us, looked on respectfully and in seeming wonder, while "the melody of joy and health" was swelling up from beneath the deep shadows of the tombs of ancient Egypt's idolatrous kings, to give honour and praise to the one living and true God.

The sheikh of the village in the plain below had appointed a night-watch to secure us against the pilfering propensities of their neighbours ; and having spread our mattresses beneath our tents upon the dry sand, we lay down to sleep. Fatigued though we were, the excitement inseparable from the events of such a day, and from the associations of the scene around us, made sleeping all but impossible. When I had begun to doze, the gentle rustling of the loose edge of the tent-curtain,—as a light air of wind kept it waving to and fro upon the surface of the desert on which we lay—made a sound so much resembling the *whish, whish* of the waters rushing along the sides of the ship, that more than once I fancied myself at sea. Growing weary at length of my fruitless attempts to sleep, I left the tent and walked out into the open air. The waning moon and the cloudless starry sky gave just the kind and amount of light that suited the scene. Night best accords with the place of graves.

As I strolled about amid the tombs, and looked up at the great head of the sphinx, and traced against the midnight sky the gigantic outline of the towering pyramids, it seemed to me that I drank deeper into the spirit of the place than it was possible to do in the broad light of day; and especially amid the noise and distraction of the restless and officious Arabs, who were ever at one's side. Now all was lonely and silent as death. My recollection of the pyramids, while memory lasts, will be linked with the thoughts of that midnight hour, when I wandered alone among the graves of the men whom Joseph fed, and of the generations who had cowered and trembled before that terrible rod of Moses, every movement of which brought down another and more terrible plague on their devoted land.

As the day broke, one of the Arab watchmen beside the tents began to repeat the call in which the muezzin summons the faithful Moslems to prayer—a touching and solemn usage, however erroneous and unspiritual may be the worship in which it invites the followers of the false prophet to engage. We had a long and fatiguing journey before us, and it was necessary that we should be early upon the road. While the servants were packing the baggage, we proceeded to examine the sphinx more minutely than we were able to do the night before. Both the pen and the pencil, however, have been so often employed to describe it that it needs not to tell any reader what it is like. The sand, which had been cleared away by Colonel Howard Vyse, has again swept all round the base of the image, and buried the huge leonine fore-limbs of the monstrous figure, that stretch out horizontally upon the platform of rock on which they rest like those of a lion *couchant*. The enormous human head and breast, set upon a lion's body, was, no doubt, meant to be the emphatic emblem of intelligence in combination with power. The royal beard that depended from the projecting chin, and the kingly crown that surmounted the massive head, have both been broken off; and as the nose has suffered a similar mutilation, the whole aspect of the figure is mis-shapen and monstrous. As we

stood before it, the sun rose over the Mokattam Hills in the far east, and shed its golden radiance on the head of the image, which is rather more than 100 feet in circumference. It was the giant emblem of that royalty that lay entombed in the pyramids behind it. Not without reluctance did we withdraw from this strangely fascinating spectacle. At length, however, the preparations for the journey of the day were complete; and, persecuted to the last moment by the insatiable Arabs with their everlasting cry for *buksheesh*, we turned our backs on the sphinx and the pyramids, and descended to the margin of the plain. The air of the morning was delightfully fresh and cool. Our course lay southwards, along the base of the sandy and rocky elevation from which we had come down, just skirting the outer edge of the cultivated land. The natives were already busily at work—driving out their flocks of sheep and goats to the pastures, breaking off the yellow flowering heads of the tobacco plant, raising water by the *shadoof*, a long pole having a weight at one end and a bucket at the other, or urging on the oxen that were every here and there turning wheels for the same purpose. During the inundation, when the waters of the Nile are at their height, they are carried across the plain in canals, from which the whole plain is irrigated. When the river is low, as at the time of our visit to Egypt, the water requires to be raised, in the manner above described, from wells which the Nile fills. The water so raised was poured into little runnels previously prepared to receive it, and so distributed over the fields. The *d'hourra*, or Indian corn, was above ground, each plant growing in a little pit, about eighteen inches from the one nearest to it. The larks were singing overhead, and all nature was bright and cheerful.

At the distance of about eight miles from the Ghizeh pyramids, where we had passed the night, we came to those of Abou-sir. In the interior of these pyramids, lining the chamber of the royal tombs contained in them, are glazed tiles of white and blue, the oldest specimens of that art known to exist. Three

or four miles farther on, we found ourselves abreast of the pyramids of Sakkara. From a modern village of the same name on the edge of the plain, about a dozen of Arabs came out as we approached to offer us their services as guides. In the transparent atmosphere of Egypt it seemed not more than a few hundred yards from the plain to the pyramids when looking up the sandy slopes at the head of which they stand. In reality it was at least a couple of miles, as I learned to my cost, having dismounted and taken to my feet by way of relieving the active little beast that carried me. Sinking to the ankles at every step in the burning sand, and scorched by the now fiery sun, I found an hour's walking in the desert far more toilsome and oppressive than that of a whole day on the springy heath and amid the elastic air of my native Scottish hills. At a little distance from the pyramids, which, though of great size, are not nearly so large or lofty as those of Ghizeh, we entered one of the ibis mummy-pits, in which these sacred birds of ancient Egypt were buried. The entrance was all but completely choked up with rubbish, and we had to creep at first on hands and knees. Farther in the gallery was of sufficient height to enable one to walk erect. It is hewn out of the solid rock; and in recesses along the sides of the gallery, like bins in a wine cellar, the ibis mummies are piled in hundreds and thousands. The body of the bird has been wrapped in mummy-cloth, and then inserted into a pot of baked clay, much about the size and shape of one of our ordinary sugar loaves. Within the mummy-cloth nothing now remains but dust, into which the body of the bird has mouldered.

From the Ibis tomb we proceeded to one of the most recent and interesting discoveries made in Egypt—that of the tombs of the sacred bulls. The locality of the Serapeum, or temple of Apis, and of the tombs connected with it, had long been matter of dispute. A few years ago, however, this controversy was conclusively settled by M. Mariette, an enterprising Frenchman, who spent two whole years beside the pyramids of Sakkara pro-

secuting the researches that were at length so nobly rewarded. A long approach, hollowed out of the solid rock, and now half filled with sand, leads gradually down to the entrance of the subterranean galleries in which the tombs of the Apis bulls are found. The stone lions, ranged at intervals along this approach, if they still exist, are all covered by the sand; the same material had also all but shut up the mouth of the subterranean gallery. We found the only way to get in was to fling ourselves on the top of the heap of sand—a sand so fine, that it needs but to be touched, however lightly, to make it run like a stream of water—and so to slide down the slope into the gallery below. The gallery is tunnelled into the solid rock, and extends in one direction about two-fifths of a mile. A lateral gallery leads out of it, but which is not nearly so long. The gallery is about twenty feet in height, and in most places it is nearly of the same breadth. At intervals, along the sides of the gallery, there are large cavern-like recesses, somewhat similar to the small side chapels in the aisles of a Popish cathedral; and in each of these stands the huge sarcophagus of a sacred bull. The sarcophagi are of black porphyry from Upper Egypt, each sarcophagus being hewn out of a single solid block, highly polished, and some of them covered with hieroglyphics. The sarcophagi are fifteen feet in length by eight in breadth, and about seven feet in height. A ponderous lid or cover of the same material lies on the top of each, but pushed so far along, as to leave an opening at one end, which enabled us, with the help of the lights supplied by the Arabs, to see into the interior of the sarcophagi, and to ascertain that all, so far as we examined them, are entirely empty. The number as yet discovered is thirty, and of these we visited nearly the whole. Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson is of opinion that there must be galleries still unexplored containing many more. The average life of the sacred bull was from seventeen to twenty years, and thirty bulls would not carry the series nearly so far back as to the commencement of the Taurine dynasty. If the deified beast presumed to live more than twenty-five years, its

worshippers put it to death, by drowning it in the sacred fountain of its own temple. If before that period it died a natural death, it was buried with obsequies so splendid, as often to ruin those who had the charge of the ceremonial. And yet this was in intellectually cultivated Egypt—the nation that was foremost in all the secular sciences and arts. “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to *birds*, and four-footed *beasts*, and creeping things” (Rom. i. 22, 23). How literally true is the Word of God!

After leaving this remarkable place, and being now somewhat in need of both rest and food, the Arabs led us to a large tomb beside the pyramids, where we breakfasted with great comfort. The shade was perfect within the bosom of the solid rock, from which, in comparative coolness, we could look forth into the burning desert that lay outside. In this pleasant retreat, the thermometer stood no higher than 71°. Thoroughly refreshed by this agreeable and seasonable interlude, we emerged about eleven A.M. from our “hole in the rock,” paid and dismissed our guides, who had proved greatly less troublesome and much more serviceable than those of the Ghizeh pyramids; and remounting our donkeys, which, along with their attendants, had been sheltered in an adjacent chamber of the same capacious tomb, we resumed our journey. In returning to the plain below, the heat and the glare of the noonday sun, reflected from the yellow sand, were all but overpowering. It was an indescribable relief to find ourselves once more amid the bright green verdure of the great valley of the Nile. At the village of Sakkara, on the edge of the valley, we saw the shepherds “dividing the sheep from the goats,” in preparation for the midday milking that was about to take place. Here also we saw the process of threshing out the corn. The machine was turned by oxen, over the grain that was laid beneath it; and a man sat upon it in a sort of chair, apparently to keep it down by his weight, and to make it press with greater force. The wheels on which it moved were

notched, so as both to bruise the corn and cut the straw. It reminded us of that expression of Scripture, "I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth" (Isa. xl. 1, 15). The chopped straw, called *tibbin* by the Arabs, is eaten by the camels, and seemed to be everywhere extensively used.

A little way beyond the village, we struck across the plain in the direction of the Nile, through fine fields of clover, lupins, wheat, beans, d'hourra, tobacco, &c. After riding about three or four miles, we reached the mounds that mark the site of the ancient Memphis, where dwelt of old that proud and powerful monarch, who met the demand conveyed by Moses for the liberation of Israel, with the haughty and scornful reply—"Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I obey his voice." How impressive it was to find lying there to this hour—prostrate on his face, and half buried in the soil—the colossal statue of one of those mighty Pharaohs who "knew not Joseph," and who despised Joseph's God. The Pharaohs have perished—Memphis has been swept with the besom of destruction—but God's church and people still live to praise His name. As the statue lies a little on one side, the profile of the face is all above ground. The features are fine, the expression pensive, and the aspect of the countenance of almost feminine softness. The crown and the long-cased beard, characteristic of royalty, still remain. The whole figure indeed is un mutilated and entire. It is to this statue alone that travellers usually refer in describing the remains of Memphis, and our guides from Cairo seemed to know of no other. One of the natives of the place, however, observing the interest with which we were examining it, conducted us to a place about half-a-mile off—and outside of the palm groves in which it lies—where we found many other remains of the ancient city, chiefly sculptures, carved stones, and fragments of pillars. Among these was another royal statue of the same colossal size, and also with the back uppermost. The crown is broken off, and lies beside him; the profile of the face is buried in the mud; his left hand holds a

scroll; part of his breastplate can be seen, which bears some resemblance to that worn by the high priest of the Jews. The solid block of stone, out of which the figure has been cut, is square behind, and covered with hieroglyphics. On one side of the block, immediately behind the left limb of the statue, there is a female figure carved in relief, probably the king's daughter. If the mounds of this deeply-interesting locality were opened, and the numerous remains which they inclose were examined, much additional light would undoubtedly be thrown on the history of ancient Memphis, if not also on that of God's ancient people. Nowhere is it so likely as here that traces of their presence in Egypt, perhaps even of the events connected with their deliverance from its yoke of cruel bondage, should be found. But unless the Government of France or England should take the work in hand, it is never likely to be done;—it would be too expensive a task for private enterprise. The statues we saw are of a close-grained silicious limestone, which the modern Egyptians are more likely to burn for use, than to preserve as relics of an age and history of which they are profoundly ignorant. As we sat among these ruins, we read from the book of the prophecies of Isaiah, "the burden of Egypt;" and felt how true it is, that though heaven and earth shall pass away, no word of God shall pass away till all be fulfilled.

After passing through Mitrahenny, a large village not far from the Nile and quite near to the mounds of Memphis, the donkey-drivers urged us to proceed more rapidly, lest night should overtake us before we got back to Cairo. The road was good, and we cantered along to please them for five or six miles. We were now passing through the great palm forest we had seen afar off, the day before, from the citadel of Cairo. The palms were most of them from fifty to sixty feet in height, and afforded a most agreeable shade. Every tree in the forest seemed to be carefully watered from the adjacent Nile. At the north end of this forest, we rode down to the river, hired a large boat, embarked, donkeys and all, and sweeping out into the stream,

glided down to Old Cairo. A heavy thunder-storm was rolling across the valley and threatened to overtake us, but it did not come our way. By taking to the river, we saved the time and the fatigue of riding six or seven miles round a great bend which it makes at this point, and enjoyed, besides, the seasonable refreshment of drinking copious draughts of its world-famous waters. Landing at Old Cairo, and remounting our donkeys, we reached, at half-past six in the evening, the Hotel d'Orient of Cairo, or Musr, as the Egyptians still call it, and which is evidently the singular form of the Mizraim of Scripture. There were of old, as now, two Egypts—the upper and the lower; and hence the name Mizraim, or the Egypts. It was no small privilege to have enjoyed the look we had gotten of the one, though we had no prospect of being able to visit the other.

But the great subjects and scenes of the day must not allow me to forget our poor donkey-boys, who did so much for our comfort. They had been on foot since four o'clock in the morning—running, dancing, singing in the hot sun the entire day, and seemed, after all, as fresh when they entered Cairo as when they left the pyramids. There was something very taking about the merry-hearted little fellows. "You know my donkey name?" said the one who had the special charge of my wife's very pretty gray, as we were trotting along near Mitrahenny. "My donkey name Steamboat, him very good donkey!" And running to its head, and putting his ear to its mouth, he looked up with a sly twinkle in his laughing eye to its rider. "You know what my donkey say? My donkey say, Good lady, give me *oringhis*." And when the orange was immediately tossed to him, catching it in the air, and making sundry somersets along the ground, he bounded off to his companions to proclaim his triumph. In short, the extraordinary activity of these boys, their half-roguish humour, their intense love of fun, and their bright, sparkling eyes, drew one's heart towards them and made one sigh to think of the unpromising future that lay before them. With such mental and physical capacities as they seem to be endowed with,

what might not be made of these poor Arab boys! But the soul seems to die out of them as they grow up. The want of mental culture, the personal and political servitude in which they are doomed to live, and, above all, the utter absence of all the elevating, and sanctifying, and sustaining influences which flow from the blessed religion of Christ, seem to dwarf the poor Arab's mind, and keep him in a state of intellectual childhood all his days.

Next morning, after an early stroll through the crowded streets and bazaars, we left Cairo, and returned by rail to Alexandria. We were glad to find all well with our patient in the yacht. He was going on, under the kind care of one of the ladies who remained in the yacht, as favourably as the nature of the case admitted of. But time and perfect quiescence were indispensable to a complete cure. It was arranged accordingly, under medical advice, that he should be left at Alexandria for three or four weeks, in the house of Dr. Philip, who was both a missionary and a medical practitioner, and who was so good as take him in charge. So soon as we should reach the coast of Palestine, one of the yacht's crew was to return to Egypt, and to bring him by the French steamer to Tripoli, in time to meet us when we should have completed our approaching tour through Syria.

Our last day in Egypt was the Sabbath. In the forenoon we attended public worship in the English Episcopal church; and in the afternoon I had an opportunity of conducting divine service, and preaching the Word to a little company of Scottish Presbyterians, under the roof of my friend Mr. Fleming, an eminent merchant of Alexandria. We had been but a week in Egypt, but that week was worth a twelvemonth in ordinary lands.

CHAPTER II.

The voyage from Alexandria to Jaffa—First sight of Judea—The landing—
The town of Jaffa—A bird's-eye view of the land about to be visited—
Ride to Ramleh—First night in Palestine.

ON Monday, the 20th of April, 1857, we bade adieu to Egypt—the land of the Pharaohs—the house of ancient Israel's bondage. It was about an hour after noon when we weighed anchor, and began to creep cautiously out, through the long and intricate channel of the harbour of Alexandria, where shoals and sunken rocks are uncomfortably numerous, and where the singular clearness of the water makes them appear much nearer the surface than they really are. The wind was both light and bare; and only such a vessel as the *St. Ursula*, able to walk when necessary into the wind's eye, could have contrived, in the circumstances, to make her way so cleverly to sea. A fine ship yacht, which had been lying near us, went out an hour before, towed by a tug-steamer, and had already gained a good offing, and set all sail for Jaffa before we had passed the light-house. Her people had been "jawing" our men the night before, and telling them they would take the news of our coming to the Syrian coast. Bound as we were for the same port, a race was inevitable. It was slow work so long as we were entangled with the long line of reefs on the one hand, and with the little island of Fort Marabout on the other. Till we got fairly out of the grips of the land, our course kept us close-hauled; but no sooner had we made a little sea-room, where we could slack away a few points off the wind, and take a little more of the now freshening breeze into our canvas, than we began to shorten rapidly the distance between us and our rival. About two hours afterwards, when we were sitting below, Mr. Cairney called down the open skylight of the saloon—"Will you come on deck, and take a

look at the *Sylphide*?" Already we had her right abeam, and by sunset she was nowhere. We had dropped her beneath the horizon. We paid, indeed, that same evening a rather smart penalty for taking so much of the wind, and for shaving the land so close as we had been doing. Early in the evening we had passed Nelson Island, and the Bay of Aboukir, where, in 1798, Napoleon's fleet was destroyed, and along with it all his fond dreams of Oriental conquest. We were then lying a course that should have carried us clear, by a good many miles, of even the most projecting point of the coast line, and in this course we had run on till about nine o'clock. We had assembled in the saloon for evening worship, when we were suddenly startled by that most horrible of all sounds at sea, the sound beneath one's feet, that tells in a moment that the ship's keel is in contact with the bottom. Four or five times in succession, as she was let down by the sea, the same grating sound was heard. Her head, had, of course, on the instant been put about, and as the lead-line was kept incessantly going, it needs not to say how eagerly we listened, as the man sang out—"half three—three fathoms—four—by the mark five—no bottom at seven." Hurrah! we are clear. As she rounded off when the helm was first put down, the sea over the quarter was all a-wash upon the bank, the edge of which we had grazed. It was a narrow escape in a tideless sea like the Mediterranean; and we did not fail, when we again descended into the saloon to resume the service in which we had been so rudely interrupted, to offer our united and heartfelt thanks for the signal deliverance.

On looking into Admiral Smith's *Memoir of the Mediterranean*, a work of the highest authority on that sea, and which formed part of my travelling library, a passage turned up which seemed to throw some light on this occurrence. When describing the action of the current which sweeps eastwards along the shores of Egypt, he takes occasion to point out the influence it exerts in drifting onwards, accumulating, and finally depositing the large quantity of alluvial substances which are brought down

by the Nile, and carried by its vast volume of waters far out to sea. As confirming and illustrating his views on this subject, he at the same time quotes from Dr. Clarke's travels, the following account of an incident, not unlike our own, which befell the frigate *Romulus*, very near the same place, in 1801:—"As we were sitting down to dinner," says Dr. Clarke, who was at the time a passenger in the *Romulus*, "the voice of a sailor employed in heaving the lead was suddenly heard calling—'half four.' The captain, starting up, reached the deck in an instant, and almost as quickly putting the ship in stays, she went about. Every seaman on board thought she would be stranded. As she came about all the surface of the water exhibited a thick black mud. This extended so widely that the appearance resembled an island. At the same time no land was really visible, not even from the masthead, nor was there any notice of such a shallow in any chart on board. The fact is, as we afterwards learned, that a stratum of mud, extending for many leagues off the mouths of the Nile, exists in a moveable deposit near the coast of Egypt, and when recently shifted by currents, it sometimes reaches quite to the surface, so as to alarm mariners with sudden shallows, when the charts of the Mediterranean promise a considerable depth of water. These, however, are not in the slightest degree dangerous. Vessels no sooner touch them than they are dispersed; and a frigate may ride secure where the soundings would lead an inexperienced pilot to believe her nearly aground."*

As our accident took place some hours after nightfall, we could not judge of the colour of the sea. Certain it is, that the bank we touched, from both the shock and the sound it produced, must have been considerably more solid than that which alarmed the crew of the *Romulus*. And yet as we must have been at the time not far east of the mouth of the Rosetta branch of the Nile, it is not improbable that we were indebted for our misadventure to the same causes which Admiral Smith describes.

* *Admiral Smith*, page 170.

Only those who have been at sea can realize the sensation which an occurrence of this kind creates.

Warned by this event to keep the treacherous Egyptian coast at arm's length, we stood right off the land for nearly three hours before the *St. Ursula's* head was again laid for Jaffa. At day-break the wind left us, and we made little or no way till noon. By the observation taken at that hour, we found that we were about ninety miles away from Alexandria. After mid-day the breeze returned, and we glided gently along at the rate of seven or eight knots an hour. In the course of our voyage from the Straits to Malta, and from thence to Egypt, we had become tolerably familiar with all the ordinary phenomena of the Mediterranean, and had now, accordingly, nothing to take off our attention from the needful preparations for our approaching journey through the Holy Land. In one department or another of these preparations our whole party were now busily employed. Some took to setting up our tents on deck, to learn the best and quickest method of pitching them. Others were poring over the most recent maps of Palestine, or turning over the pages of Robinson and Stanley—planning routes and taking notes. Others still were occupied with our camp equipage, and especially with our culinary apparatus—testing its powers of making tea and boiling eggs, and of accomplishing various other feats equally important.

At length the sun went down again, turning for a moment the rim of the sea,—as it sunk below it, and shot its parting rays through it,—into the most brilliant emerald, and then leaving the surface line of the darkening waters to trace itself along the unbroken verge of the sky. A little longer and the firmament was flashing with its countless stars, shining through that transparent heaven, as they never shine through our grosser northern air. Gentle as was the night breeze, we could hardly sleep under the exciting anticipation of seeing, on the morrow, that land of lands, which for three and thirty years was the dwelling-place of the Son of God!

When the next day broke, however, the wind had once more all but died away, and till twelve o'clock, our speed was reduced to not more than two or three miles an hour. When the usual mid-day observation was taken, the fact was ascertained, that, since noon of yesterday, we had run but 120 miles, and that we were still fifty miles distant from the Syrian shore. Again, after the turn of the day, as is usual at that season in the Mediterranean, the breeze revived, and late in the afternoon the long blue line of the hills of Judah became dimly visible along the eastern sky. Before the sun set we could faintly trace the broad belt of yellow sand along the sea shore; and soon after the night set in we got an occasional glimmer of the lights in Jaffa. These, however, soon disappeared. The Syrians, like most Orientals, love early hours. There is no lighthouse, or port-light, or guidance of any kind, to help the benighted mariner in approaching this ancient sea-port of Jerusalem, and we had nothing for it but to dodge about, and keep a good offing till the morning.

When I went on deck, at six A.M. of Thursday, the 23d of April, the *St. Ursula* was heading in towards the land, but with so light a wind that her motion was scarcely perceptible. It threatened to be a tantalizing business; but all at once, to our great joy, a smart breeze, roughening all the sea, came up from the south, and we ran along gaily at the rate of eight or nine knots; the scene before us rising incessantly into greater distinctness, the vague outline of the coast gradually coming out in all its local individualities, until at length even the smaller and minuter objects upon the beach could be plainly discerned.

Right a-head was the steep rocky bluff, about 200 feet in height, on which Jaffa is built, and which forms the southern extremity of the very slight curve in the shore, not deserving the name of a bay, which constitutes all the shelter that ships have on this part of the coast. The rock is precipitous towards the sea. The town is built on the side of the headland that faces the north-west and slopes rapidly down from the crown of

the ridge to the sea-beach. It looks well from the sea;—its flat-roofed, stone-built houses, towering in successive tiers one above another, give it an aspect of solidity and strength. The nakedness of its rocky site contrasts, at the same time, not ungracefully with the rich and exuberant verdure of the extensive orange-groves which, on the land side, girdle it all round. North and south of Jaffa, far as the eye can reach, the shore exhibits the same uniform features. First, a broad belt of sand, swelling up here and there into little sand-hills; and beyond this a fertile tract of country, almost a plain, but rising gradually as it recedes from the sea, until, at the distance of fifteen or sixteen miles, it merges into the long continuous range of the Judean Hills. These hills, from the foreshortening of the comparatively level ground between them and the shore, appear, when looked at from the sea, to rise up more abruptly than they really do; and present a front about as high, and seemingly as bold, as the Ochils, where they rise above the Carse of Stirling. A nearer view, however, considerably modifies this first impression.

It is easy thus to picture their physical aspect, but much more difficult to describe the state of feeling with which we gazed upon them as we neared the shore, and at length, about eight in the morning, dropped our anchor in the open roadstead, about a mile from the beach. Into the midst of these very hills the five kings of the Amorites advanced, more than 3000 years ago, when they went to Gilgal to meet that mysterious people who had come through the Arabian Desert to take possession of the land. And back again were they driven headlong down through that mountain-pass, right in front of our anchorage, and along which the morning sun was now shining so softly, but where of old the victorious leader of the host of Israel, as he hung on the rear of the discomfited Amorites, uttered these sublime and memorable words, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon;" and where "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies."

For fourteen hundred years thereafter, what a history did these hills of Judah embrace within their bosom. Amid these hills God, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake to men by the mouth of inspired kings and prophets; and in the end He spake unto them there by His Son. Amid these hills was cradled that Christianity—that pure, and holy, and life-giving faith,—which is destined to overspread the world, and to bind the whole human family in love to one another, and in love to God. On the face of these hills, and full in view from where we stood is that Lydda from which the Apostle Peter came down to this very Joppa, to learn here, beside the sea-shore, God's great design as to the calling of the Gentiles, and the ultimate subjugation of the whole earth to Christ.

Delightful though it was to gaze on these exciting scenes, we had now to give our attention to matters of a more homely and common-place kind. We had a long and toilsome journey before us, through a country where the many modern facilities of travel are still entirely unknown. Poor flesh and blood cannot, even in Palestine, dispense with certain creature comforts and conveniences which, if the traveller in that country is to have at all, he must take them with him. A busy hour or two were accordingly spent in getting our multifarious baggage laid out upon the deck—tents and tent furniture, portmanteaus and leathern bags of all shapes and sizes, pots and pans, crockery of various sorts, &c., &c. At length the jolly-boat was lowered, and this somewhat bulky cargo placed on board. Two of our party went ashore in charge of it, and to engage men and horses for the journey to Jerusalem. About an hour before noon the boat returned to the yacht and took the rest of us ashore.

When approaching the coast in the morning, we had been surprised to find no fewer than six large steamers at anchor in the roadstead. The purpose for which they had come there became sufficiently apparent as we approached the beach, which was literally covered with crowds of pilgrims of the Greek and Latin churches on their way home from the Easter festivals at

Jerusalem. The entrance to the boat harbour is by a narrow opening of not more than thirty or forty feet in breadth, between two reefs of rock; with a smart breeze and a roughish sea it required a steady hand and a quick eye at the helm, to thread this needle, but Jack Fergusson, one of our crew, ran us in cleverly without taking a single drop on board of the surge that was boiling on either hand. The path that runs along the beach, between the sea and the rock on which Jaffa stands, all the way into the town, was like a bee-hive ready to swarm. We were subsequently informed that the number of pilgrims who had gone up this season to Jerusalem, and who were now returning home, was not fewer than fifteen thousand. It was hardly possible to put one's foot to the ground without the risk of treading on man, woman, or child, of the hundreds and thousands who were huddled together, waiting their turn to be taken off to the steamers. A narrow lane, it is true, was left in the centre of the road, but along this scanty space an endless string of beasts of burden, donkeys, horses, camels, with their ponderous projecting loads, were laboriously making their way, while the shouting of their Syrian drivers made confusion worse confounded. It was hard work to fight one's way through this motley maze of tribes and tongues, and many coloured garbs, and most unsavoury smells. At length, however, we escaped through an archway from this street of the harbour, and began to ascend one of the steep and narrow alleys that lead up into the heart of the town.

The first house we entered was that of Mr. Kruse, of the Church Missionary Society, an excellent man, who, with his amiable and most intelligent wife, have been labouring in the midst of abounding difficulties and discouragements to sow a little of the good seed of the kingdom on this barren shore. By a long series of narrow outside stairs, and passing as we ascended through several little stone-paved courts with apartments of one kind or another opening into them, and among others the missionary school, we at length reached, in the uppermost storey

of all, the dwelling-place of the missionary. In a simple apartment, somewhat scantily furnished, but clean and well arranged, Mrs. Kruse, who had been made aware of our coming, was waiting to receive us. This apartment stood on the roof of the house, like a saloon upon the deck of a ship. Around it there was ample space for moving about in the open air; and nothing could be finer than the view, or more grateful than the delicious sea breeze. We did not fail, from this singularly favourable outlook, to sweep far and wide with our glasses the broad bright bosom of the Mediterranean, but our friend the *Sylphide* was still amissing.

As we looked down from this elevation upon the beach beneath us, and on the reefs and shallows over which the sea was breaking into foam, and sparkling in the noonday sun, we could well understand the reluctance which our friend, the owner of the *St. Ursula*, discovered to lie here an hour longer than was necessary, with an open sea tumbling in on the one side, and no end of rocks and shoals on the other. As we were indulging in these reflections, they were not a little confirmed by a remark of Mr. Kruse, that three vessels had been lost within a mile of where we stood, in the course of the two or three preceding weeks. The population of Jaffa amounts to about 6000, composed,—as regards Mohammedans,—of Turks and Arabs; and,—as regards Christians,—of Maronites and members of the Greek, Latin, and Armenian Churches. The people generally, according to the missionary's representation, are intensely worldly—concerned about nothing but buying and selling, and getting gain. Neither Moslems nor Christians, so called, appear to give themselves much thought about spiritual things; and both alike would seem to be equally inaccessible to the Protestant missionary. A little is doing with the young through the missionary school; but at Jaffa it seems to be as yet the day of very small things.

Mr. Kruse having kindly procured for us a guide, we proceeded to make the tour of the town. The streets are filthy in

the extreme, and not half as wide as the narrowest and worst of our city lanes. By far the most interesting spot in Jaffa, is the traditionary house of Simon the tanner. In order to reach it from Mr. Kruse's house, which stands about midway up the hill, we descended through a labyrinth of steep alleys and stairs, all loathsome with filth; and finally were led into the court of a house, the outer basement wall of which was literally washed by the waves. In this court there is a well, and beside it the stone on which the tanner's leather is said to have been beaten. Even in the eyes of the Moslems, the house is held sacred; and the tradition that connects the spot with the Scripture history is so ancient, and at the same time so likely in itself, that there seems no good ground for rejecting it. This much at least is certain, that the house is in Joppa, and stands by the seaside, and answers all the conditions of the sacred narrative. We had no desire to question a story at once so probable and so pleasing, and willingly resigned ourselves to the feelings which a place, hallowed by such memories, could not fail to excite in any Christian mind. Though the house itself, or at least the upper portion of it, is comparatively modern, we ascended to the roof of the storey that overhangs the court, and could there, with the bright sky above, and the sea fretting and murmuring beneath, more completely realize the position of the apostle when he went up to the house-top to pray.

There is something both striking and suggestive in the fact, that the apostle should have been brought down to the margin of the great western sea to receive the final and explicit intimation of the Divine will as to the calling of the Gentiles. Beyond that sea, and covered with gross darkness, lay those nations among whom the gospel was in after ages to have its chief seat; and from which, as from a new centre, it seems destined ultimately to go forth and to overspread the world.

But we must not linger in Jaffa. If it stood anywhere else than upon the shores of Palestine, one might be willing to bestow more time upon it, and to hunt up the many curious incidents

in the history of a place which has seen the Roman legions fighting beneath its walls; which has heard the shouts of Cœur-de-Lion and his crusading host as they marched on to the siege of Ashkelon; and where Napoleon's treatment of the sick and wounded soldiers has left the darkest stain on his memory. Plain, prosaic, matter-of-fact sort of minds may not be able to enter into it, but there is a strange excitement in the thought that here one is looking on the very harbour in which the Phœnician sailors of Hiram, king of Tyre, landed the floats of timber from Lebanon for the building of Solomon's temple, and out of which Jonah sailed in the ship of Tarshish when he was fleeing in his faint-heartedness from the command of the Lord to go unto Nineveh and to prophesy against it. But Jaffa is to us the entrance-gate of the Holy Land, and we are impatient to pass through and to see what lies beyond.

The distance from Jaffa to Jerusalem is said to be about thirty-five miles, although from the time and labour it costs to make the journey, one would suppose it to be at least double that distance. Intending to proceed that evening as far as Ramleh, it was deemed prudent to fortify ourselves for the three or four hours' ride we had before us, by making acquaintance with a Jaffa dinner. For this purpose we made our way up a long winding narrow street to the only hotel in the town. It is kept by a Jew, and proved to be a very tolerable sort of place. The apartments, as is common in the better sort of Syrian houses, are all arched, and very much resemble such vaulted chambers as may be found in the basement storey of some of our old baronial castles. This form of building, together with the great thickness of the walls, effectually keeps out the heat, and secures a very agreeable coolness and shade. The muleteers, who had been engaged for the journey some hours before, were to have, as they confidently assured us, everything ready for the road by the time we returned from the hotel. But to promise is one thing, and to perform quite another with Orientals. Arabs are never in a hurry. Punctuality is a virtue of which they know

nothing, and on which they seem to set not the slightest value. When we arrived at the foot of Mr. Kruse's outside stair, we found a dozen or fourteen horses crowded together among heaps of rubbish in the end of a narrow lane, but not a package on the back of any one of them. It were vain to attempt to describe the process of loading the baggage horses, and saddling and bridling the others. One steed was as lank as Don Quixote's famous Rosinante, and the broad, square-built, unwieldy Syrian saddle could, by no device, be got to rest with anything like steadiness on the razor-like ridge of the poor creature's back. Another took umbrage at the bulk or weight of our tent equipage—perhaps at both—and more than once succeeded, by kicking and jerking suddenly about from side to side, in ridding itself of the burden. It really seemed at times as if we should never escape out of that broiling lane. Even when it was at length announced that the arrangements were complete, and that we had nothing to do but mount, the difficulties were by no means at an end. Our company were not all qualified "to witch the world with noble horsemanship." Considering the fragile nature of Syrian stirrup-leathers and saddle-girths, one would almost have required to vault into his seat like "the feathered Mercury." It needs not to say, therefore, that those whose method of mounting more resembled that of the unwieldy knight who "clombe to the saddle," found, more than once, the said saddle most politely, though rather inconveniently, meeting them half-way in the ascent. In other cases, that curious piece of mechanism that serves in Syria the purpose of a stirrup-iron, but which is much liker one of the tin-scales in which our grocers weigh out their sugar, would most provokingly, just when the foot had been firmly planted in it, part company with the rotten leather-strap to which it was attached, and bring the expectant rider suddenly and uncereemoniously to the ground. Unmooring the good *St. Ursula*, even when bad weather or deep water had made us pay out a double length of chain-cable, was nothing to getting our Syrian cavalcade under weigh.

At length, however, about half-past three o'clock, we began to move out of Jaffa. The process is very much like riding from the garret of a very high house down to the cellars;—a considerable part of the descent through the streets to the level country outside consists of literal stairs. But though they look somewhat formidable, the Syrian horse understands them, and gets along with far less discomfort than his rider. It is impossible to imagine the delight with which we found ourselves emerging at last from those fetid and filthy streets—if streets they deserve to be called—into the open country. For nearly a couple of miles our road led us through those magnificent orange gardens which, on the land side, envelop the town. These gardens are fenced by hedges of prickly pear, twelve or fourteen feet high—a huge kind of cactus bristling with thorns, so fine and penetrating that no one who has used liberties with them once will venture on the same indiscretion a second time. Some weeks afterwards I made my way along one of the enormous horizontal branches of one of those same prickly pears, on the shores of the sea of Galilee, in order to cut from its topmost bough some of its splendid yellow flowers for my wife who wished to examine them. As the consequence, I found my legs and arms stuck full of thorns as sharp as a wasp's sting, and of which it cost me days to rid myself. As we rode along the soft sandy lane between these gigantic cactus hedges, we were regaled with the delicious odour of the fruit which they so effectually guarded. Not that this was all the experience we had of its refreshing qualities. For almost at every step we met troops of donkeys laden with oranges, which the owners were taking into town for sale among the thousands of pilgrims who were passing through it, or for exportation in the small fruit-vessels that were lying in the bay. As many as we chose to buy, we could have for a shilling a hundred. Our only regret was, that their perishable nature in that warm climate, being as they were so fully ripe, together with the difficulty of carrying them, compelled us to be contented with a moderate supply.

At this point in our progress, it may not be without its use to take a sort of bird's-eye view of the land we are about to visit, so that we may carry along with us a more definite idea of its length and breadth and general configuration. It is a little country, and of a rather homely aspect withal, to have been the scene of events so great. Russia or the United States would hold it in a corner of their immense territories. Even including Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria, it is scarcely as long as Scotland, and not more than half as broad. Its geographical limits are very strongly marked. The Mediterranean Sea, which washes its whole western shore, exhibits a hardly more conspicuous boundary line than does that strange deep gash which runs along its entire eastern frontier, and which, beginning in the north between the stupendous mountain ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Libanus, extends southward to the extremity of the Dead Sea and far beyond it. This long strip of country terminates on the south, about forty miles below Jaffa, at the Arabian Desert; and reaches on the north to the river Orontes, which, rising at the watershed of Cœle-Syria, near the ruins of Baalbec, holds a northerly course till at the farther end of the Lebanon range it turns westwards and escapes into the Mediterranean. The opening from the sea down which this river flows, seems to be what Scripture designates as the "entrance of Hamath" (Num. xxxiv. 8), and describes as "the north border" of the land. The country may, in a rough way, be represented as forming a very tall triangle, the base of which rests on that "great and terrible wilderness" through which the tribes of Israel came out of Egypt; the back of which stretches along the Titanic trench of the Jordan valley and Cœle-Syria; and the face of which,—the hypotenuse, to speak in mathematical phrase,—looks out on the blue waters of the Levant. On this western side, a plain of considerable breadth lines the sea-shore, and extends from Gaza at its southern limit as far north as Tyre. This belt of comparatively level country varies in breadth from three or four to twelve or fourteen miles. The southern section, which consti-

tuted the ancient and fertile kingdom of the Philistines, stretches northwards to the neighbourhood of Jaffa. Here it merges into the plain of Sharon, which, running on towards Mount Carmel and the Bay of Akka—Acre—forms its middle division. At this point, and immediately to the north of Mount Carmel, it breaks out eastwards at right angles to the sea-shore, forming the great plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel, which traverses nearly the entire breadth of the land from the Bay of Acre to the Jordan. Following the coast-line beyond that bay, the level tract that lines the shore contracts more and more, and finally disappears as it approaches Tyre, where the majestic Lebanon begins to send down his rugged roots to the water's edge. Such is the general aspect and character of the western side of Palestine.

Passing over to the opposite side of the land, we find that there is more or less of a plain along the whole margin of its eastern frontier too. This plain, so far as Palestine proper is concerned, begins in the north at the base of the great Hermon, the Jebel-es-Sheikh, near the sources of the Jordan, and stretches onwards and downwards from this point to the Dead Sea. The first, or northern section of it, is the plain of the Hûleh, in the midst of which lies Lake Merom, the smallest and uppermost of the three Jordan lakes. The second, or middle section of it, includes, and is all but covered by, the Lake of Tiberias or Sea of Galilee. The third extends southwards from this lake to the Dead Sea. This remarkable valley contracts at various points, so as to leave little more space than suffices for the passage of the Jordan river, whose entire course it embraces. In general, however, it has a breadth of from four to six or eight miles. Its level, even at its northern extremity, is as low as that of the sea, and from this point the depression continues, and rapidly increases as it advances to the south. The respective levels of the three lakes may serve to indicate the progress and extent of this depression. Lake Merom, the uppermost, is, as already mentioned, about the level of the Mediterranean. The Lake of Tiberias, which begins about twelve or fourteen miles farther

down the valley, is 747 feet lower than the sea. This number is the mean of several measurements by different scientific men. While at the Dead Sea, the last of the Jordan lakes, and which is about sixty geographical miles beyond the Lake of Tiberias, the depression amounts to more than 1300 feet. Nor does this striking and characteristic feature of the eastern frontier of the country disappear at the head of the Jordan valley. The plain, it is true, is here crossed by the spurs of the great Hermon, which, passing over to its western side, merge into the hills of Kadesh Naphtali. But beyond this rougher and more broken stage of this vast hollow, it again assumes, and more unequivocally than ever, the character of a plain, overhung on either hand by gigantic mountain walls. This huge hollow, running away northwards for eighty miles between the snow-clad ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Libanus, is Coele-Syria—hollow Syria,—known among the Arabs as the great plain of the Bukaa.

Keeping in view, then, these distinctive features—the maritime plain running along the one side, and that of the Jordan valley and of the Bukaa stretching along the other—let us now take a look at what lies between; in other words, at the middle and main portion of the land. In a general way, and taking the country lengthwise, this central region may be characterized as a hill country, rising as it advances northwards, and finally terminating in the stupendous mountain chain of the Lebanon. Not, indeed, that the hills are either strictly continuous, though they are very nearly so, or that they possess throughout anything like one uniform aspect and character. From the borders of the great wilderness on the south, as far north as to Samaria, central Palestine consists of a vast congeries of thick set, rounded limestone hills and elevated table lands, from thirty to forty miles in breadth—occupying, in short, the entire space between the Dead Sea and the Jordan valley on the east side, and the maritime plains of Philistia and Sharon on the west.

This mountainous region, as it approaches the district of Samaria, is cleft by broader and deeper valleys, while the hills

assume more of the character of distinct ranges, traversing the country, rising to greater heights, and presenting much more varied outlines. Still farther north, where Samaria terminates and Galilee begins, the country is crossed, as already noticed, from the sea at the Bay of Acre right over to the neighbourhood of the Jordan valley, by the vast plain of Jezreel. This plain may be likened to a huge arm of the sea, walled in on the south by the hills of Samaria, and on the north by those of Galilee. Even this magnificent plain, however, though fifteen or sixteen miles in breadth, does not entirely interrupt the succession of hills that form the great central region of Palestine. The plain does break right through them, it is true, but they rise nevertheless here and there above it, in a series of detached heights, like a chain of volcanic islands thrown up from the bottom of the sea, and traversing this sea-like plain from side to side. Gilboa, the little Hermon, and Mount Tabor, are the gigantic links of this mountain chain, thrown across the plain of Jezreel; the plain itself being an immense basaltic basin, from whose bosom these limestone hills have been upheaved by volcanic force. By these rocky links, the lofty ranges of Samaria are united to the confronting hills of Galilee.

Galilee, the third great division of Palestine, though quite as mountainous as Samaria, has also many fine and spacious valleys, full of fertility and beauty. In its northern parts the hills rise higher and higher, till they combine with the grander range of the Lebanon, which runs on in one majestic sweep, till it terminates at the river Orontes, where the country we are now describing ends.

If this rapid sketch have served the intended purpose, those who have followed it will now be able to form a tolerably correct idea of the shape and size, and general structure of this remarkable country. The comparatively narrow plain along the sea-shore, the hill country in the centre, the deep *crevasse* of the Jordan valley beyond;—these are the leading features and main outlines which belong to the physical form of Palestine. It is

necessary, however, still further to understand that the whole of the territory now spoken of was never, except for a very limited period, subjugated by the Hebrew people. The familiar expression, "from Dan to Beersheba," more correctly defines the limits, from north to south, within which the Hebrew kingdom was practically confined. In other words, the Holy Land of Scripture history, may be considered as lying between the base of the great Hermon, at the head of the Jordan valley on the north, and a line drawn from Gaza on the Mediterranean coast, to the lower extremity of the Dead Sea. Beersheba stood near that southern boundary, and Dan, on the north, was overhung by the stupendous heights of the great Hermon.

The distance between these two points is not more than 160 or 170 miles; and that entire space may be considered as pretty equally divided into the three well-known territories of Judea in the south, Samaria in the middle, and Galilee in the north. Judea and Samaria take in, each of them, the entire breadth of the country; extending, as they both do, from the sea-shore to the Jordan valley. Galilee, on the other hand, while at the south end, where it marches with Samaria, it also embraces the whole breadth of Palestine, narrows as it advances northwards; its western boundary running inland, and inclining away to the north-east, so as to leave the district of Phœnicia between it and the sea-shore. Northwards from Dan, as already explained, lies Coele-Syria—a vast hollow of nearly eighty miles in length, and from ten to twelve miles in breadth; having the great range of the Lebanon mountains rising to the height of 10,000 feet on its western side, and occupying the entire space between it and the sea, and having on its eastern side, the all but equally lofty chain of Anti-Libanus. Of this latter chain, the great Hermon, which rises immediately above the site of the ancient Dan, is the southern extremity. From this magnificent and many-headed mountain, nearly 10,000 feet in height, Anti-Libanus runs off like the ribs of a fan partially unfolded, separating itself into three principal ranges, of which the one

that forms the eastern boundary of the plain of Cœle-Syria runs nearly due north, the central one a little to the east of north, while the course of the third range is about north-east. The famous city of Damascus, the capital of ancient Syria, lies immediately under the south-eastern face of this last-mentioned range of Anti-Libanus, at a distance from Dan of about fifty miles.

Such is the country through which we are about to conduct our readers—a limited, but many featured land, and fuller, by far, of deep undying interest than any other country on the face of the earth.

Returning, then, to Jaffa, from which we set out to make this digression, let us now resume our journey to Jerusalem. The distance, as already stated, is about thirty-five miles; and Ramleh, some ten or twelve miles on the way, is to be our halting place for the night. So far we have a perfectly open country before us. Our route lies a little to the south of east, and crosses the southern part of the plain of Sharon. There is nothing of the nature of a regularly made road here, or, indeed, anywhere in Syria. In the hill country, as we shall find out by-and-by, the bridle paths along which the traveller has to make his way, are often of the most break-neck character that can well be conceived. I have crossed the high Alps three or four times, but the worst mountain track I have met with in Switzerland is better than many of the thoroughfares in central Palestine. As indicative of the state of the roads in this wretchedly neglected and misgoverned country, the fact is tolerably suggestive and significant that there is no such thing as a wheel carriage of any sort to be found in it from one end to the other. Even a wheel barrow is a convenience altogether unknown. The very stones employed in building the houses of Jerusalem itself are carried in rope nets, slung across the back of a donkey or a camel.

In such a district of country as that which lies between Jaffa and Ramleh, the neglected state of the roads occasions the

traveller, at least in the summer season, comparatively little inconvenience. The beaten path serves the purpose well enough, and as fences are quite unknown, there is nothing to hinder him from diverging a little to the right or left, when it proves either too soft or too rough for the horses' feet. Nothing, indeed, could be more enjoyable than our ride to Ramleh. For some miles beyond Jaffa, the country is one open and nearly level plain, well cultivated, and covered all over with fine crops of various sorts of grain, of which millet, wheat, and barley, appeared to be the most common. The soil having in it a considerable proportion of sand is rather light in quality; but as the latter rains had been abundant, and had ceased less than a month before, the whole face of the earth was fresh and green, with the exception of the barley, which was already tinging with the golden hues of approaching harvest. In many places the ground was all in a glow with the brilliant red of the Syrian poppy, which abounds in the plain of Sharon.

About four or five miles from Jaffa the path divides, the branch to the left leading right on to the ancient Lydda, while the other, inclining a little to the right, conducts to Ramleh. A mile or two farther on the country begins gradually to swell up into gentle undulations, and groves of olives appear on every hand. From the slight elevations over which the path now leads, views are ever and anon obtained of the entire breadth of country between the hills and the sea. Nor is it easy to imagine anything more grateful to the eye than the scene thus spread out on all sides around us. Behind lay the broad bright sea, gleaming with the glories of the evening sun; before, the long line of the hills of Judah, bathed in the purple light of the sun's parting beams. To the left, the far reaching plain of Sharon, with every wooded knoll and little rocky eminence that rose above it thrown up into full relief by the level light of the closing day; to the right, a more broken country, whose irregular surface lessened the range of view, while it added, by the variety, to the general effect of the whole.

No doubt there are scenes as fair, or even fairer, to look upon in our own land; but then, with a few brief intervals, we had been for a month at sea, and only those who have looked so long on the face of the deep, grand and glorious as at times it is, can appreciate the charm of finding one's foot on the solid earth, and of casting one's eye over such a landscape as was now lying before us. And besides all this, and more than all this, we were now in Palestine; and what landscape would not catch a thousand charms from the many thrilling associations which that magic name calls forth.

But the night is beginning to fall, and the dews are heavy in this part of the world, and we must be pushing on. All along the road we had been meeting an almost continuous stream of pilgrims pouring down from Jerusalem to Jaffa. Many were on foot, but the greater number were mounted; the men generally on horses, the women and children on donkeys, or comfortably slung in panniers across the backs of camels. The men were nearly all armed, carrying long brass-mounted guns over their shoulders, and pistols in their belts, and not unfrequently swords at their sides. Here and there, as we approached Ramleh, groups of these travellers were bivouacking for the night on the edge of some olive grove, or beneath the shelter of some projecting bank; and sometimes to the number of hundreds together on the open face of the country, without a bush or a tree near them. Their preparations for the night were simple, and soon made. Their horse or camel-furniture served them for blankets and bedding. Some had small tents into which they crept; those who had none wrapped themselves up in their cloaks and horse-cloths, and, with their saddles for pillows, lay along upon the open ground.

How strange and affecting to think of these people coming in such numbers from Greece and Italy, from Asia Minor, and from the shores of the Black Sea, to gaze at the so-called "holy sepulchre" at Jerusalem, or to dip themselves in the sacred waters of the Jordan, while the living Christ and the sanctify-

ing Spirit of God, are of no account in their eyes. They come to seek the living among the dead; taken up with the material signs and symbols of heavenly things, while the heavenly things themselves are unknown or despised. They compass sea and land to acquire an external and ceremonial sanctity—the sort of sanctity that belongs to a Moslem Hadj, who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca—but they set no value on a new heart and a right spirit. And yet, after all, it may be worth while to ask whether their long, laborious, and senseless pilgrimages, be one whit more pitiable than are the delusions followed by thousands of our own far better instructed people. With us, it is not a saint's tomb but a gold mine that sets the stream of pilgrims a flowing; but the result is much the same, as regards the wisdom displayed, when we find men who would hardly open their Bibles or turn the corner of a street to find salvation for their souls, running away to the antipodes to grub in the "diggings" for a little yellow dust.

It had been resolved, before we set out from Jaffa, that we should seek shelter for the night, at Ramleh, in the Armenian convent. There are also at this place convents of the Greek and Latin churches, but they are notoriously inhospitable to Protestant travellers. The Armenians have the reputation of being more friendly, and on their good offices we had resolved to cast ourselves. On the way, however, we received information that changed our mind. Some miles from Ramleh we were overtaken by a German, connected with the Prussian Hospice at Jerusalem, who assured us we should find ourselves much better served and accommodated than in any convent, at the house of the agent of the British consul. It was only then, for the first time, that we became aware of there being any official representative of the British name and nation in the town at all. He was a Syrian indeed, but "*ein freundlicher mann*," as the German assured us, and we at once determined to put up at the sign of the Queen. This consular agent, in some round-about way, of her majesty, did not exactly, it is true, keep a hotel: hotels in Syria, save in

one or two of the coast towns, and in Jerusalem and Damascus, are altogether unknown; but, nevertheless, "for a consideration," perfectly understood, though not formally expressed, he receives travellers under his roof. The plan probably succeeds quite as well as that of presenting a bill. It was all but dark when we reached the town, and some caution was necessary in threading our way along its narrow and unlighted streets. At length we arrived at the door of a large and rather lofty building, standing alone, and fronting one of the convents. After considerable knocking, the door was at last opened, and when the necessary explanations had been made, the whole party were at once admitted. Our baggage was immediately brought in, and deposited in one of the large open paved courts in the interior of the building. Thereafter, we were conducted by a series of outside stairs, in one of the angles of the court, up to the principal roof of the house. Here we found ourselves in a square open space, with a wall of five or six feet high on two sides, and with a range of apartments opening into it on the two others, and with the bright starry sky above our heads. This open space was roofed over at one end; and there, in the midst of a large company enjoying their pipes and coffee, sat our host. He immediately rose to receive us, and, through our Arabic interpreter, expressed his desire to give us such accommodation as his house could afford. There was but one private apartment, a small room with two small beds, which was assigned to the ladies—being kindly given up for their use by an English gentleman on his way from Jerusalem to Jaffa, who had arrived an hour before us. The more public room was large, and being provided with divans or sofas all round the walls, was quite sufficient for the male portion of our party, and for a good many others besides. Shortly after our arrival, one of the attendants served us with sherbet, in the form of a sort of lemonade. Bread, eggs, and coffee were brought in about an hour afterwards, and here we spent our first night in Palestine. To reach it we had made a voyage of 3500 miles across the deep. On the way we had

been rudely buffeted, and more than once driven into harbours of refuge on our own coasts by the fierce equinoctial gales. We had been tossed and driven to and fro on the huge rolling billows of the Atlantic in the Bay of Biscay. We had been pursued, amid thunder, and lightning, and hail, by a furious tempest along the coast of Africa, for six-and-thirty continuous hours. But here we were, safe and well, at last.

There is another voyage on which we and our readers embarked long ago, but which is still uncompleted. It, too, has probably had its storms and perils, and there may be more of these yet in store before it is done. But with a divine chart to direct our course, and with One who taketh up the sea in the hollow of His hand to guard us, faith has nothing to fear. Happy the night that finds us falling asleep in the "desired haven," to awake on the morrow—a morrow never to end—in the heavenly Canaan, the *true* and the *only* Holy Land!

CHAPTER III.

Ramleh and the surrounding country—Approach to the hills—Latroun, the castle of the penitent thief—Its commanding position—Enter the mountain pass—Aspect of the hill country—The resting-place in the olive grove—Extreme ruggedness of the road—Abû-Gaush, the robber chief—Kuriet-el-Enab, the Kirjath-jearim of Scripture—Kolounieh, the supposed Emmaus of Scripture—The approach to Jerusalem—First sight of the Holy City—A night on the Mount of Olives.

NEXT morning we were astir by break of day. The favourite point at Ramleh, for a panoramic view of the surrounding country, is the well-known tower about three-fourths of a mile to the west of the town. There have been many disputes among travellers as to its origin and use; but there seems really no reason to doubt that it was the minaret of a mosque. The architecture is decidedly Saracenic, and the external gallery running round it near the top, obviously connects it with the usages of Moslem worship. As it is about 120 feet in height, and stands on the very summit of the highest ground about Ramleh, no position could possibly be more commanding. Our arrangements, however, for an early start did not admit of a visit to the tower. As the next best thing, I climbed up all alone to the roof of the apartment in which we had slept, and which was the highest part of the house. Standing there, on the summit of the dome—a sort of large, bee-hive looking protuberance, common upon the roofs of Syrian houses—I could look down on the town itself, and far and wide over the adjacent country, without a single intervening object to intercept or limit the view. The reader will perhaps kindly mount up alongside of me, that we may try to gather up a more exact and definite idea of this interesting vicinity than it was possible for us to gain amid the falling shadows of the previous night.

Ramleh means "sand," and the name is evidently descriptive of the soil on which the town is built. We are here at the western or upper end of it, and from this point it straggles away eastwards down the gentle declivity on which it stands, covering, with its large convents, mosques, and not very compact streets, a considerable area. It is interspersed with gardens, fenced as usual with the prickly pear; and it contains about 3000 inhabitants, of whom a third part are understood to be Christians, chiefly of the Greek and Armenian churches. In a straight line, the sea is nine or ten miles off on the one side, and the hills about seven or eight on the other. Northward lies the great plain of Sharon, and southward the equally extensive region of Philistia. Such is the stand point from which we are now to look around us. And first let us turn to the north. That little group of houses, about three miles along the open country, with its white mosque and lofty minaret gleaming out so brightly from these dark olive groves, is Ludd—the ancient Lydda—where Peter spake these words of power to one who had lain palsied upon his bed for eight long years: "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." That mosque at Lydda, like many others in this land, was once a Christian church—the church, strange to say, of the patron saint of England. St. George, if faith can be reposed in ancient chronicles, was born here in the third century, suffered martyrdom in Nicomedia under the persecution of Diocletian, and was afterwards buried at this his birth-place. The church which had been built over his tomb, standing, as it did, on one of the main roads from the sea-coast to Jerusalem, and turned, as it often was, into a fortress, became the scene of many a fierce conflict between the Saracens and the Crusaders; and hence, perhaps, the prominent place which the saint's name came to acquire in the crusading host, and ultimately in so many of the nations of western Europe.

If it were possible to individualize minute localities at such a distance as twenty miles, one might be able to point out, right

away over Lydda on the far-off horizon, the site of that Antipatris to which Paul was brought down by night from Jerusalem, under the protection of a guard of Roman soldiers, when sent as a prisoner to Cesarea. Facing round in the opposite direction, and now looking southwards into the great plain of Philistia, we have spread out before us, and stretching far farther than the eye can reach, that fertile and famous country that made so long, so obstinate, and often so successful a resistance to the people of Israel. If it were not for these undulations that swell up in front of us immediately beyond the sandy plain of Ramleh, we should be able to see, about six or seven miles off and a little to the east of south, the village of Akir—the ancient Ekron of the Philistines, whither the captured ark of the covenant was finally carried after that victory over the Israelites that broke the heart of poor old Eli, and in which his guilty sons were slain. It is now nothing but a mud-built Syrian hamlet. Of the other chief cities of Philistia, celebrated in Scripture history—Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Gath—the localities of all have been satisfactorily ascertained excepting the last. There is no Gath now in which to tell with triumph of the disasters of Israel. And though Ashkelon does survive, it is only in the shape of ruins crumbling down from the rocky heights on which it stood, and from which it once looked so proudly upon the sea that foamed and fretted beneath its walls. Gaza, too, is a desolation. Baldness has come upon it, as the ancient prophecy foretold. While Ashdod, the modern Esdūd—the Azotus at which Philip was found after his eventful interview with the Ethiopian eunuch—exists only as a small Moslem village. It lies about ten or twelve miles south-west from Akir, or Ekron, and not very far from the sea-shore. Twelve or fourteen miles farther on, in the same direction, is Ashkelon; and about as much more beyond it lies Gaza, at the south-western extremity of Palestine.

Having already, on the way from Jaffa, traversed the country between Ramleh and the sea, it only remains that we should

sweep, with a rapid glance, the eastern or opposite side of the horizon. The sandy slope on which Ramleh stands falls away to the east for a short space beyond the town, after which the country, in that direction, steadily rises, though not rapidly, till it reaches the hills. Looking right up towards that mountain country, we have almost immediately in front of us, a little to the south of east, the point that divided of old the hill country of Judah from that of Benjamin. The pass opening a short way to the left of that point, and straight up from Lydda, is the line of the camel-road to Jerusalem by Beth-horon and Gibeah—the road that appears to have been chiefly used in Scripture times. Running the eye to the right, along the face of the hills, the next opening that presents itself is that of Yalo, the famous Ajalon of Joshua's victory over the Amorites. It is well known to those who are at all acquainted with questions of Scripture criticism, that commentators have been much perplexed by the passage which records the majestic miracle of that day. Gibeon is eastwards from Ajalon, and looks down the course of that valley as it descends westwards towards what is now called the Merj—a fertile plain outside of the hills. To speak accordingly of the sun "standing still" upon Gibeon, seems to imply that the miracle took place *early in the morning*, when the sun was just rising over Gibeon, and when the fading moon, now far away in the west, was overhanging the valley below. But this theory can by no means be reconciled with the facts of the sacred history, which plainly implies that before the miracle was performed, a great battle had been already fought, and that the enemy had been pursued for many miles. Some larger portion of the day therefore must needs by this time have run its course.

Unable to surmount this difficulty, other commentators on the passage have understood the expression as to the sun standing still upon Gibeon to mean, that the sun was now right above the mountain—in other words, that it was noonday; and this view they have thought to be confirmed by what is stated in

a subsequent verse, that the "sun stood still in the midst of heaven." But this construction serves only to introduce additional and greater difficulties. For how could the moon be needed, or have been spoken of at all, while the sun was still in the zenith, and when consequently the moon's light, even if the orb itself were above the horizon, must have been drowned and lost in the blaze of the meridian sun? Moreover, what occasion was there for the miracle at all, if the sun, according to the *first* supposition, were as yet only appearing above the eastern horizon, or, according to the *second*, were still in its noonday strength? On either view, there would have been time enough to complete the rout of the enemy before night could come on. The staying of the sun in such circumstances, could hardly have appeared as either a striking or a seasonable interposition of Almighty power on behalf of the chosen people.

The one expression which appears to favour the *second* view now noticed is that already quoted, namely, that "the sun stood still in the midst of heaven." But the question is, What is meant by "the midst of heaven?" The words which immediately follow may very well suggest a doubt as to whether it really does mean the zenith—the meridian. The words that follow are these, "And *hasted not to go down* about a whole day." This clause of the verse seems rather to imply that the sun, at the moment in question, was near his setting, and that his "hasting to go down"—that rapid rush which the sun seems, in those parts of the world, to make when he is approaching the horizon—was suddenly arrested. Now, if instead of "the midst of heaven," we read, as the Hebrew allows, "in the partition or division of the heavens," at the point where the upper and the lower heavens or hemispheres meet—that is, at the horizon—the whole passage becomes self-consistent, the topographical difficulties disappear, the necessity that called for the miracle comes out in full force, while, at the same time, the fact of its being a stupendous miracle that had been wrought, must, on this view, have been made at once and conspicuously manifest. Let us

look at the facts of the case in the light of this method of interpretation.

The alarm of the Israelite invasion had spread through the land. Tidings had reached the princes of the Canaanites in the interior of the country that *Jericho*, their great frontier city, had fallen; that *Ai*, their next stronghold among the hills, had been taken and destroyed; that the Gibeonites, tempted by the approach of this mighty host, had surrendered on the simple and slavish condition that they should be allowed to live. This concession had given Israel a footing in the very heart of Canaan. There was no time for delay. A blow must be struck at once, if the whole country was not to be left to fall into their hands. Hence the energetic and united movement upon Gibeon of the five confederate kings. Joshua, on his side, perceives the magnitude of the crisis. He arrays his force, marches all night from the camp at Gilgal, far down in the Jordan valley, and advances up through the defiles of the mountain country above. By morning he is at Gibeon. Without delay the battle is joined, and is fought on both sides with all the desperation which the issues involved in it could not fail to produce. At length God gives the victory to Israel. Joshua resolves to follow it up with an immediate pursuit, and chases the Canaanites through the wild rocky country, westwards from Gibeon. They are now "at the going down to Beth-horon," hurrying along the descending valley towards the plain below. The sun is on the verge of the horizon. Behind Joshua, Gibeon is already glowing as if all on fire with the sun's setting rays; while, before him, the crescent moon fast following after the sun, is hanging above the valley of Ajalon. One hour more and the shades of night will have fallen, and the flying Canaanites, shrouded in the favouring darkness and familiar with their own mountain glens, will yet elude the avenger's grasp. A Divine *afflatus* comes upon the leader of the armies of Israel. Moved by another spirit than his own, he gives utterance to the sublime command, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of

Ajalon." The astounding miracle is realized. The sun stays upon Gibeon ; that mountain continues to blaze in the brightness of his level light, and the moon continues to overhang the valley below, until the people have avenged them upon their enemies—until the armies of the confederate kings are utterly broken and destroyed. Yes, and there it is, the very valley that witnessed the scenes of that memorable day.

A little to the right of Yalo is the pass through which we ourselves are by-and-by to ascend towards the Holy City—this route being the one most commonly followed. It is the shortest no doubt, but it is the ruggedest too. Beyond this pass, some six or seven miles to the south of it, there is another notable locality deserving of a place in one's memory. It is Ain Shems, the Beth-Shemesh of sacred Scripture, reminding us by its position, immediately above Akir or Ekron, of the well known and striking circumstance connected with the restoration of the ark by the lords of the Philistines to the people of Israel. The milch-kine yoked to the new cart, on which the ark was placed, when purposely left to themselves, instead of turning, as their instincts might have been expected to prompt them, towards their calves tied up at home, "took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh"—the way, that is, directly opposite to that of home, and leading right up to the hills of Judah—"and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand nor to the left" (1 Sam. vi. 12). The topographical discoveries are quite recent which have made the neighbourhood we are thus looking on to reflect this casual, though clear and interesting, confirmation on the graphic and remarkable incident in sacred history now described. The survey we have now made, though brief and rapid, may serve perhaps to set up some landmarks in the reader's memory as it did in ours, and thus enable him henceforth to assign to Ramleh, in his mental map of Palestine, a local habitation as well as a name.

The morning hitherto has been bright and beautiful, and the whole landscape, from the mountains to the sea, has been smiling

in the beams of the rising sun. But already a pale-blue mist begins to gather in the south-east, rising from behind the hills, half-hiding their more distant summits, and creeping insensibly up on the face of the sky. A similar dimness is stealing slowly at the same time over the surface of the sea. It is the coming scirocco, the hot wind of the desert, so common at this season of the year, and betokens an oppressive day.

By this time breakfast, such as it was, had made its appearance, and I hastened to descend from my solitary elevation to share with my fellow-travellers in the morning repast. If the house where we were now assembled was the same in which the distinguished author of *Biblical Researches in Palestine* lodged in 1838, as its position and whole interior arrangements seemed plainly to indicate, its hospitalities would appear to have considerably declined since that period. His host, the worthy Abûd Murkus, must have ceased to reign, and some new and less propitious dynasty have been established in his room.*

We were greeted by no lady of the house, like Dr. Robinson, and no Nubian slave came to wash our feet. No female of any sort made her appearance in the establishment. The law of the house must have become more decidedly Oriental since the learned American was a guest under its roof. Even the ladies of our company beheld no female face, and heard no female tongue. And last of all, that *ouisine*, whose many admirable achievements Dr. Robinson so gratefully celebrates, had lost apparently its ancient art. For us it accomplished nothing more than the boiling of a few small Syrian eggs, and the heating of a little coffee. Fortified by this very moderate repast, we descended to the lower court of the building, received the parting salutations of our host, placed the customary acknow-

* Abûd was dead, and his son now reigned in his stead—American and British consular agent all in one. An American traveller who was here the year before us, takes very much our view of the existing dynasty. "Mark's (Murkus') intentions were good enough, but his hospitality was rather a failure."—*Prime's Tent Life in the Holy Land*, p. 49.

ledgment in his hand, got our baggage placed upon the horses, and at six o'clock started for Jerusalem.

For nearly three hours our road led us through an open upland country, the greater part of which was under the plough. Its general aspect was somewhat bare and unpicturesque, and resembled a good deal some of the half moorland and recently reclaimed districts of Scotland, where the amenity and fertility of the lower levels is beginning to give place to a scantier soil and a poorer vegetation. Here and there, indeed, and especially to the left of our route, the landscape was more attractive, presenting as it did, every now and then, some wood-crowned height sloping gracefully down in bright, green, park-like fields, into the dark ravines out of which it rose. Instead, however, of the pleasant village with its church and spire, or the fine old manor house, or the smart new villa, which so sweet a spot would suggest as its appropriate accompaniment in England, there was either no sign of human habitation about it at all, or at the best some miserable hamlet, whose low walls of unburnt brick, or loose stones, could hardly be distinguished from the soil on which it stood.

About eight o'clock we passed El-Kubâh, a somewhat better village of this class, close to the track we were following. Not long afterwards, and very near the hills, we reached El-Latroun, the birth-place, as a more than doubtful tradition tells, of the penitent thief who found salvation upon the cross when expiring beside the Saviour at Calvary. It stands upon the apex of a conical hill or tell, overlooking the Wady Aly, where that little glen opens from the mountain pass above into the more level country below. The fortress which crowned this eminence, the *castellum boni latronis*, was evidently designed to command the Jerusalem road, and must have been admirably placed for such a purpose. That this was the design of the fortress is not a little confirmed by the fact which Scripture records, that in a neighbouring pass through the hills, Solomon "built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities, with walls,

gates and bars." The same strategic reasons which induced that wise king to erect these defences in the route from the low country to Jerusalem that was frequented in his time, would induce the men of a later day to do the same in this other line of approach to the capital of Judea, so soon as it began to be used. The remains of the so-called castle of the penitent thief are still so extensive as to show it to have been a stronghold of a large and important kind. The upper walls evidently date from the middle ages, and belong no doubt to the period of the Crusades, of which the pointed arch, occurring as it does frequently in the ruins, is an unequivocal index. The under buildings, however, manifestly reach back to a much older time, and seem to be of Roman construction. There seems to be good reason to think that here stood the ancient Modin, where dwelt the valiant Maccabees, and where Simon, the brave brother and successor, in the leadership of the Jews, of Judas and Jonathan, "built a monument upon the sepulchre of his father, and raised it aloft to the sight," . . . and "set great pillars, and upon the pillars made all their armour for a perpetual memory: and, by the armour, ships carved, that they might be seen of all that sail the sea" (Macc. xiii. 27-29). Certain it is, the site well corresponds to the historical notices of Modin, and it has Jaffa and the sea full in view.

Passing on from this interesting spot, in the hollows around which some straggling reapers were cutting down their little patches of barley, we descended into the Wady Aly, and following its upward course, found ourselves getting rapidly in among the hills. On a declivity, about a mile to the north of this little valley, Dr. Robinson places, and apparently on good grounds, the ancient Enmaus-Nicopolis, there being a village there with several relics of antiquity about it, which still bears the name of Amwas. It does surprise one, however, to find so intelligent and accurate a writer arriving at the conclusion that this was the identical Emmaus of the evangelist Luke's narrative—the place to which the two disciples went out, accompanied by our Lord on

the day of His resurrection, and from which they again returned the same evening to Jerusalem. In order to reach this conclusion, he has, first, to get rid of the received reading of the passage, which describes Emmaus as situated at the distance of threescore furlongs—sixty stadia—or less than eight miles from Jerusalem; and instead of this, to read, on the strength of some much less reliable MS., *one hundred and sixty stadia*, or twenty miles. And next, he has to reconcile with this theory, the unquestionable fact that the two disciples walked the distance, whatever it was, twice over in the course of the afternoon and evening of the same day.

The earlier, and apparently the chief part of that memorable day had been occupied with the startling news of Christ's resurrection, and with the many anxious attempts of his disciples to verify the report. It was "towards evening, and the day was far spent," when the two disciples came to Emmaus. Their evening meal was subsequently prepared. It was seemingly towards the close of the repast that their eyes were opened, and that they knew the Lord. It was therefore, in all probability, some time after sunset when "they rose up and returned to Jerusalem." And we know that when they reached the city, they found the eleven, "and them that were with them," still assembled in their customary place of meeting. To reconcile all this with a theory which places Emmaus on the margin of the maritime plain, and at a distance of more than twenty miles across a rugged mountain country from Jerusalem, seems simply impossible. The road on which we were now proceeding to the Holy City was the shortest the disciples could have taken. From the Wady Aly, by which they must have come, it took us seven hours' riding to make the journey. Wherever Luke's Emmaus may have been, it could not have been here.

About half-past nine o'clock A.M., we gained the head of the more open valley, and entered a narrow ravine, and from this point our course was completely shut in among the hills. Near the mouth of the pass we came to a little rustic café, consisting

of a few poles stuck into the ground, and roofed over with the leafy branches of some of the neighbouring trees to exclude the sun. Some natives were here driving a brisk trade in coffee and oranges with the pilgrims returning from Jerusalem and on their way to Jaffa, who were incessantly passing down the road. The coffee was thick and muddy, as we found it to be generally in Syria, but it was hot and strong and not unrefreshing, and we were only too glad to have it.

From this point the road becomes exceedingly rough and difficult. For miles it is simply the rocky bed—dry at this season of the year—of the winter torrent that rushes down in the rainy season from the hills. At other times escaping out of this tortuous water-course, where one would think it impossible that a horse should fail to break his own legs and his rider's neck, the path would sometimes slant along the steep hill-sides. The horizontal limestone strata of which these hill-sides are composed, rise like successive terraces, one above another, each receding a little from the one below it, so as to leave a ledge, comparatively level, of ten or twelve feet between them. This ledge being covered with soil and vegetation, the face of the hill, as seen across the ravine, presents a singular and almost artificial appearance. The ends of the successive strata, where they crop out, look like the retaining walls so universal in Malta, built to keep the soil on the flat spaces above them from being washed down by the heavy rains into the sea.

The ravines, or narrow valleys, through which, in long succession, our route led us, are so like one another that to describe one is, in a general way, to describe them all. They are not without beauty. The *flora* is abundant and brilliant. The wild-rose, the gum-cistus, and the anemone, especially attracted our notice; while the smaller flowers, with their gay and varied colouring, in many places literally carpeted the ground. Wherever the valley widened a little, or where some lateral valley opened into it, trees were numerous, particularly the olive, which

all through the hills seems to be carefully cultivated, the soil around the younger and fresher trees being regularly trenched.

At eleven A.M., we dismounted in a large grove of venerable olive trees, with a few sycamores interspersed, at a point where three or four valleys meet, to rest the horses and ourselves. The abundance of water at this place, welling up from a copious fountain in the neighbourhood, was its chief attraction to the muleteers. This was Ain-Dilbeh, or the fountain of the Sycamore. It was a strange and striking scene that here burst upon our view. The whole grove was alive with the stir and bustle of countless groups of travellers, scattered all around—in all sorts of attitudes, and in all sorts of attire—Asiatic, African, and European; some rolled up in their cloaks and fast asleep upon the ground; others reclining against the gnarled trunks of the old trees, and quietly smoking their long pipes, the bowl resting on the turf; others still busy with their cooking vessels, or hastening with water from the fountain, or milk from the goats, while horses, donkeys, and camels innumerable, disencumbered of their loads, fed or roamed about at will. It was the half-way between Jerusalem and Ramleh, and the pilgrims on their way down were taking their *siesta* here during the heat of the noon-day sun. We made our way up the finely-wooded hill side to the outer edge of the encampment, and enjoyed ourselves there in greater quiet, looking down from a little distance on this motley and many-coloured, but withal singularly picturesque assemblage.

Two hours later we resumed our march. The path immediately beyond this resting-place runs sharply up the side of a wild rocky ravine, and is so narrow, that to pass in safety the long string of pack-horses and tall striding baggage camels, with their projecting loads, covering the entire breadth of the road, required either rare good fortune or no ordinary exertion of dexterity and skill. Often the ascending and descending parties were brought to a dead stand, and gazed at one another, each expecting the other to devise some method of getting out

of the way. Sometimes a huge, heavily-loaded camel, with its upturned head swinging to and fro at the end of its long wry neck, and with its sulky hanging under-lip thrust into one's very face, came right on with a momentum against which it would have been both vain and perilous for any one climbing up in the opposite direction to contend. To push one's horse by a desperate effort up the face of the bank, or hastily to dismount and scramble out of the path, was more than once the only means of avoiding an awkward collision. Meanwhile the vehement shouting and gesticulating of the mukharis on both sides may be more easily imagined than described.

At the head of this formidable ascent, the road comes out upon a more open and elevated tract of hill-country, entirely clear of wood, where flocks of sheep and goats were browsing here and there, amid scenery very closely resembling many of the bare and stony hill-pastures of Scotland. A few miles farther on, our course led us down into a fine valley, by much the greenest and least rocky we had hitherto encountered, and dotted all over with fine trees. On the right hand side of the valley, and well up the face of the hill, was a large and well-built village. A few hundred yards below it, and not far from the bottom of the valley, there was a fine old church—a ruin of course, but in a very perfect state of preservation. The doorway and the aisles exhibited the pointed arch, while the arches of the windows were all round. The church is one of the many memorials, still existing in this country, of the Crusades. In the customary spirit of Moslemism, it has been turned into a stable.

The village above it is called Kuriet-el-Enab, and belongs to a somewhat famous family, that of Abû-Gaush,* a family that has been notorious for generations for its lawless character—a terror to the country round, and not unfrequently a source of trouble to the government itself. In 1846 several of its chiefs were seized by the Turkish authorities, and carried off to

* A truly ominous name, signifying as it does, "the father of lies."

Constantinople, where some were imprisoned, and others banished into the states of the Lower Danube. The race, however, is by no means extinct, nor does it seem to have abandoned its hereditary habits and character. The present head of the family has been described by the public journals, since we visited the country, as again in conflict with the government, and as having had an active hand in the fierce fights that took place last summer in that part of Judea, and in the course of which a good many people were killed at the very gates of Jerusalem. We saw this Syrian Rob Roy as we passed through the valley, but received nothing at his hands save a very polite *salaam*, as he rode past our company.

It is a far more interesting circumstance connected with this place that it seems to have been the Kirjath-jearim of Scripture, to which the ark was brought up from Beth-shemesh, and where it continued to remain till it was finally removed by King David to the royal city of Jerusalem. Kirjath-jearim signifies the "city of forests;" and one can well conceive, from what is seen in the valley still, how appropriate this name may have been in ancient and happier times. That descriptive name has since suggested what may, perhaps, be called an undesigned coincidence, of the same sort which Paley has singled out, and so skilfully used as interesting subsidiary proofs of the genuineness and authenticity of the Epistles of Paul. In Psalm cxxxii. there is a glowing picture drawn of David's solicitude on the subject of the ark, which, in the days of his persecutor Saul, had been so much neglected as to have been nearly lost sight of altogether. After his accession to the throne, a house had been built on Zion for David himself—a house of regal beauty and grandeur; but no suitable provision had yet been made for accommodating the ark of the covenant, and for carrying on around it the public worship of God. The first thing necessary, in order to repair this criminal neglect, was to search out the ark itself, and to bring it up to his own royal city. Speaking on this subject the Psalmist exclaims—"Lo! we heard of it at Ephratah." He got tidings of it at the place of his own birth—

tidings which told him where it was; and accordingly it is immediately added—"We found it in the fields of the wood." Kirjath-jearim—the city of forests—answers exactly to the situation thus poetically described; and the difference between the two modes of designating the place, the one in the book of Chronicles, the other in the book of Psalms, is precisely the difference that might be expected to distinguish the style of the historian from the style of the poet. Its present Arabic name of Kuriet-el-Enab means the "city of grapes," only a very slight modification of its old Scripture designation, and equally suggestive of fertility and fruitfulness. The grounds on which, in 1838, Dr. Robinson arrived at the conclusion now stated, have appeared satisfactory to the travellers most trustworthy on such a question who have since examined it. In the course of his own more recent visit, in 1852, he carefully examined the country between this place and Ain-Shems, or Beth-shemesh, to trace, if possible, the route by which the ark had been brought up from thence to Kirjath-jearim; and these subsequent explorations served only to confirm his former conviction upon the point. From this place, then, it was that David removed the ark to Jerusalem; for "David went up, and all Israel, to Bealah, that is, to Kirjath-jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the Lord, that dwelleth between the cherubim" (1 Chron. xiii. 6). Along this now silent mountain pass, wild and rugged, that leads out of the valley eastwards, that great national procession advanced when they took away the ark; and these gray rocks overhanging our path re-echoed to the majestic music of the timbrels and harps, the psalteries, cornets, and cymbals, that proclaimed the public joy.

The only human being we saw in this solitary glen was a lonely shepherd sitting on a rock, with his long gun laid across his knees, while his small flock of sheep, with pure white faces, and bodies as black as night, were feeding in a little hollow beside him. In connection with that sable flock, a remark suggests itself on a passage in the recent work of Mr. Stanley, on *Sinai and Pales-*

time. In that generally admirable work, the accomplished author brings in the *sheep* to illustrate the language of our Lord's awfully impressive picture of the day of judgment. "The shepherds," he says, "abode with their flocks, at that time at least, within a few miles of Jerusalem; it is possible that even then, when the Mount of Olives must have been much more thickly set with trees and inclosures, such a flock may have wandered up the side of the hill, and suggested to Him, who was sitting then with his disciples over against the temple, the scene of the Shepherd of mankind dividing the parts of the flock, each from each, the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left."* A few pages further on, when speaking of this figurative style of our Saviour's teaching, he goes on to observe that "we are apt sometimes to carry out, into an infinite series of moral and theological conclusions, the truths which are stated under these material forms." . . . "When, for example, we look" . . . "on the *white* sheep and the *black* goats of the flocks in Judea, we ought to feel that the division of mankind into various classes, when represented under these figures, necessarily assumes a definiteness of separation which cannot be applied without modification to the complexities of the actual world." This is one of those expressions, in that otherwise delightful and most instructive book, that beget a feeling of uneasiness and distrust. Under the application of so elastic a principle of interpretation as this, our Lord's discourse on the day of judgment may mean anything or nothing. Moreover, the sheep in Judea are not all white. They are often as black as the goats, as the flock we passed in the valley of Abû-Gaush sufficiently proves. The whole scope and tenor, moreover, of the discourse on the day of judgment seems obviously to imply that the sheep and the goats are employed in that discourse to illustrate, not parties who are obviously and conspicuously different from one another, but parties who, though really and essentially different, might yet outwardly be, in many respects, so like, as to be easily confounded

* Stanley, page 423.

with one another. The world fails to distinguish them, but the Great Judge of all will not fail infallibly to do so. It seems to me both a far more natural and a far sounder illustration of the kind of scene that may have been in the Saviour's view when He pronounced the discourse in question, which I saw some weeks before on the margin of the Nile valley, beneath the pyramids of Sakkara. An immense flock, brought in from the neighbouring fields, was gathered there at noon. They had been brought together to be milked. The sheep and the goats were all intermingled in one mass, and in colour they were, in many cases, undistinguishable from one another; but the shepherd proceeded immediately to separate the sheep from the goats. A goat was often dragged out from among the sheep, and a sheep from among the goats; and being at length carefully and completely divided the one from the other, the goats were placed on one side, and the sheep on the other. This is not a fancy, but a fact; and a fact much more accordant, I apprehend, than Mr. Stanley's supposition, with the true teaching of our Lord regarding the great and notable day.

Leading on gradually up to the ridge of a hill, by which the glen of the black sheep was crossed at the farther end, we found the path beyond this, dropping suddenly down into a deep crevasse on the farther side, and so steep and rocky as to render it highly expedient, if not absolutely indispensable, to dismount, and leave the horses to find their way to the bottom the best way they could.

It was an unlucky necessity, for two or three of them took the opportunity of making off along the hill-sides—my wife's among the rest—to the infinite disgust and discontent of the mukharis, who had, most unwillingly, to give chase, and whom it cost a good hour's work to recover the runaways. Meanwhile, we had walked on to the extremity of this rocky ravine, where it opens out into a finely-wooded and most picturesque piece of scenery—the converging point of three valleys, and overhung on all sides by lofty hills. The hill immediately in front is crowned with a ruined castle, which, some say, was one

of the old feudal strongholds of the Abû-Gaush family; and others, with more probability, that it was one of the mountain fastnesses of the Crusaders. Whatever may have been its history, its form and position added a fine feature to a very striking scene. On the slope of the wooded height on the left, or north side, of that beautiful basin, is situated the village of Kûlonia, the inhabitants of which have the reputation of being great thieves. Below the village, and reaching down quite to the bottom of the hollow, is one continuous orchard of fruit trees of various kinds—pears, pomegranates, quinces, figs, olives, and vines.

Here, some think, was the Emmaus of Scripture history, as we were told by friends in Jerusalem who had made the antiquities of the neighbourhood a study. There is also a tradition that the brook which runs below the village, and which the Jerusalem road crosses by a stone bridge—the only bridge to be met with between Jaffa and Jerusalem—is the identical brook out of which David lifted the smooth stone with which he slew the gigantic champion of the Philistines.

The missing horses having been at length brought up, our party remounted and again set forward. It was now half-past three o'clock, and less than two hours would bring us to Jerusalem. In that exciting prospect everything else was forgotten. To push on was now the one engrossing object with us all. Little was said, for every one seemed busy with his own thoughts. Even the dullest can understand what it is to find one's foot on classic ground, and to contemplate scenes which great events have rendered glorious. I have stood on that central eminence, overlooking the field of Bannockburn, where Bruce unfurled the royal banner of Scotland, and by one decisive victory achieved the independence of his country. I have stood on the massive ruins of the palace of the Cæsars, and looked around, from the Tiber to the Alban Hills, on the majestic monuments of that kingly race that ruled the ancient world. I have stood upon the summit of the loftiest of the Egyptian pyramids, and while the sun was sinking behind the

yellow sands of the Libyan Desert, have gazed on the immortal Nile; and on the palm forests of the ancient Memphis; and, nearer at hand, on the vast necropolis of those mighty Pharaohs whose gigantic tomb-stones were, at that moment, casting their mountain shadows far across the adjacent plain. Stirring and tumultuous as may be the feelings awakened by scenes like these, they are not at all of the same kind with those which I experienced in approaching Jerusalem. There is something altogether peculiar, if not also indescribable, in the state of mind that is produced by the consciousness of being upon ground inseparably associated with the personal presence of the Son of God. For myself, I can say that this was the one absorbing thought that filled and possessed my whole being, as I rode up that winding valley beyond Kûlonia—continually rising by successive stages, to a higher and a higher level among the hills, until at length it emerges upon the gray rocky table-land above.

It was not that King David must have passed up this very valley with the ark of God behind him, and the priests and the princes of the people, and his chosen men of war, in long array, as they came from Kirjath-jearim; it was not that on the extended face of these elevated uplands, to which we had now ascended, the gathering tribes of the chosen race must oftentimes have been seen trooping along, as from the east and the west, from the north and the south, they came up at their great annual festivals, to the testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord; it was not that there the armies of Shishak, king of Egypt—the proud hosts of Sennacherib, the Assyrian from Nineveh—the myriads of great and gorgeous Babylon, led on by the magnificent Nebuchadnezzar—the brilliant brazen-coated Greeks, headed by Alexander the Great—the resistless legions of imperial Rome, with a Cæsar for their general—or that, later still, the red-cross knights of Western Europe, with their mailed men-at-arms, resolved to rescue the holy places from the fierce and fanatic Saracens, or to perish in the attempt;—it was not that all these various nations, and peoples, and

tongues had successively mustered here, and shouted their war-cries amid these hills. No! it was not this that had anything to do with the strong emotion that ever and anon shook one's frame, and filled one's eyes with sudden tears, while silently advancing along the rocky and rugged path that led us on. It was the vivid, realizing, overwhelming conviction that this very path had been—must have been—often trodden by the feet of Him, who, though He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, went about in the likeness of man, and in lowly guise, seeking and saving that which was lost.

But Jerusalem is now at hand, and from every little height over which the path winds, we expect at length to descry all that now remains of that city of the Great King. Our increasing impatience aggravates each successive disappointment, and both the time and the distance are made, in consequence, to appear tenfold greater than they really are. Far as the eye can range there is nothing before us but a surging sea of hills. At length one conical height, crowned with a mosque and minaret, and spotted on its sides with numerous trees, opens out upon the view, and at once it is recognized as the Mount of Olives. Guided by this conspicuous and touching land-mark, we now know where exactly to look. Somewhere between us and that height must be the object of our search. A hundred yards farther on, and at the distance of less than two miles, one building and then another begins to lift itself above the slightly undulating surface of the bare table-land we are crossing. First, and on the extreme right, Zion appears, with the white Armenian convent upon its summit; a little to the left, the old gray time-worn tower of Hippicus, solid and massive, comes immediately after into view; and then, as we incessantly advance, the long, embattled, Saracenic wall, from forty to fifty feet in height, that now encircles the city, stretches out before us. Yes, there is Jerusalem at last. After pausing, and gazing for a while in silence at this never-to-be-forgotten sight, an irresistible impulse moved me to give a broken utterance, as I

grasped the hand of one who was at my side, to some such words as these:—"We have come through the perils of the deep to the earthly Jerusalem. May we come hereafter to the Jerusalem that is above!"

O mother, dear Jerusalem,
 When shall I come to thee?
 When shall my sorrows have an end,
 Thy joys when shall I see?
 O happy harbour of God's saints,
 O sweet and pleasant soil!
 In thee no sorrow may be found—
 No grief, no care, no toil!

* * * *

No pains, no pangs, no grieving grief,
 No woful wight is there;
 No sigh, no sob, no cry is heard—
 No well-away, no fear.
 Jerusalem the city is
 Of God our King alone:
 The Lamb of God, the light thereof,
 Sits there upon his throne.

It is no uncommon thing, I believe, for travellers approaching by this road, to experience a certain feeling of disappointment when the city first comes into view. Nor is it difficult to understand how this should be the case. They have been accustomed to think of the mountain of the Lord's house, as established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hilla. They know, in point of fact, that they have been climbing up laboriously all day to reach it. They expect, in consequence, when they draw near, to find it towering above them on some commanding eminence, and at once filling their minds with an overpowering sense of the grandeur of its position. There are few visitors of Palestine, moreover, so unimaginative, so hopelessly prosaic, as not to have invested their conceptions of the Holy City with something of the glory which belongs to its sacred memories and its undying fame. No wonder that a

Jerusalem thus idealized—thus seen through the halo of its illustrious history—should seem to be but poorly represented by the reality that now lies before them.

Seen from no side whatever could it meet the expectations they had formed regarding it; but, least of all, unquestionably, coming from the side of Jaffa. Approaching from this western side, everything is fitted to impair the effect, which the city from other points of view never fails to produce. The foreground here is featureless and bare—an uninteresting expanse of rough and rocky ground, with a scanty, scrubby, moorland-like vegetation, and only here and there some bright green patches in the hollows. Across the uneven surface of this naked table-land, the city rises slowly and gradually into view. Instead of bursting all at once upon the sight, it comes up piecemeal and in detail—in detached and broken fragments—and the impression is unavoidably marred. Even when we have lessened the distance and advanced so near it as that we can take in at once all which on this side can anywhere be seen, it amounts to little more than the city wall. The city itself inclines the opposite way—sloping, as it does, towards the east—so that the closer we come to it, on the western side, the more completely does the lofty wall hide it from us altogether.

For myself, however, I cannot say that the disadvantages of this line of approach lessened in the very least the emotion or the interest with which I looked upon the city. It was Jerusalem—the city of David—the city where David's Lord and mine was crucified, and that was enough. With me the time had not yet come for taking much note of its external features. It was not so much the mere city itself, as the awe-inspiring events of which it had been the scene, that then occupied my thoughts. Was it only in some vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, or in some fond and fascinating day-dream, that I found myself here? Is it really true? Am I actually at the gate of that city where Solomon lived and reigned—where Jeremiah prophesied—where the Son of God

shed his infinitely precious blood, to give redemption to the world?

It was in some such mood of mind as this—a mood of mind that carried me away back to Scripture times and scenes, and which left me for the moment, in great measure, insensible to the actual realities of the outer world—that I drew near the city. On the morrow, said I within myself, I shall be able to survey all this with more searching and critical eyes. But, meanwhile, let me endeavour to complete the narrative of our movements, so as to bring the day's journey to a close.

The Jaffa gate, towards which the road we were following would have led us on, is on the south-western face of the city, in an angle of the wall close to the castle, and at the inner or northern verge of Mount Zion. In approaching this gate, the Jaffa road runs along the north side of the valley of the upper Pool of Gihon, to the point where that valley bends away to the south, and becomes the valley of the lower pool, immediately under the highest part of Zion. Had we followed the Jaffa road it would have conducted us past the bend of the valley above described, and so, onwards and upwards, having the city wall close to us on the left hand, and the deep valley of Gihon beneath us on the right. But we had previously resolved on taking a different course. Mr. Brown, who had been more than once in Jerusalem, and whose knowledge of the country and of the Arabic tongue had constituted him our guide and dragoman, had gained us over, by his glowing representations, to a scheme of his that we should encamp for the night on the Mount of Olives, and get our first proper view of the city on the following morning from that commanding position. It had not been without some reluctance that we assented to this proposal; and, had we known at the time what it was to involve, we should, most probably, never have agreed to it at all. The whole of us, and especially the ladies, were greatly fatigued, and needed rest. It was now half-past five o'clock in the afternoon, and, with the exception of the two hours

spent in the olive grove on the way, we had been in the saddle since six in the morning. Weary, however, and hungry as we were, we yielded to the counsel of our conductor, and instead of making for the Jaffa gate, we turned off at the westernmost angle of the city wall, and rode along that side of it which fronts the north-west. About half-way along this face of the wall, we passed the Damascus gate. From this point the adjacent country is well wooded, and assumes altogether a greatly more pleasing aspect. Some of the trees in this neighbourhood are very fine—one, in particular, near the Damascus gate, a noble terebinth, stately and umbrageous, with a foliage of most brilliant green, attracted much admiration. All along this side of the city, the lofty wall is built on the solid rock, which seems to have been cut down artificially for many feet below the base-ment of the wall. The deep hollow between the wall and the opposite bank, along which our road lay, had all the appearance of a regular *fosse*, dug for the purpose of strengthening the fortifications of the city.

At the north-eastern angle of the city, the wall turns sharp round, and runs nearly due south from this point to the extremity of Mount Moriah. Skirting this eastern wall, we pursued our way, having the Valley of Jehoshaphat, or of the Upper Kedron, as this part of the valley is called, on our left hand, and the city close to us on the right. In this line we proceeded as far as to the gate of Stephen, otherwise called the gate of Mary, or the gate of the Tribes, which is about mid-way along the eastern wall. This gate is nearly straight across the city, at its broadest part, from the gate of Jaffa: so that, to reach this point, we had ridden round one half of Jerusalem. Here we were right in front of our destination—the Mount of Olives. To get there we had first to descend by a steep zig-zag path to the dry bed of the Kedron in the bottom of the valley, and passing there the so-called tomb of the Virgin Mary on the left hand, and the wall of the Garden of Gethsemane on the right, to mount right up the face of the hill. The ascent is

rapid, and it required no inconsiderable urgency to induce our tired horses to face it.

As for ourselves, the riders, we were by this time in by no means the best case for either entering into, or being suitably and adequately affected by, the many solemn and tender associations of this remarkable locality. We were now in the very track of King David, when the unnatural rebellion of Absalom, his son, had compelled him to flee from the city, and when "he went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up" (2 Sam. xv. 30). More touching still, we were on the very path by which, again and again, our Lord was wont towards evening to take his way to his favourite resort at Bethany, after crying all day long in the temple and in the city, to a gainsaying and disobedient people.

Near the very summit of the hill there is a wretched little village, and beyond it, on the very top a mosque built on the site of the Church of the Ascension. It had been our intention to pitch our tents somewhere on this elevated ground, and to seek no other or better shelter for the night than they might afford. The state of the weather now led us to adopt a different course. Though the bluish haze we had seen gathering on the horizon in the morning had gradually so increased, and so covered the whole face of the sky as somewhat to lessen the glare of the sun's rays, it did nothing during the day to cool the air; on the contrary, it seemed only to make the heat more exhausting and oppressive. The atmosphere was not still; on the contrary, the wind blew at times with considerable force; but the air was hot and stifling, as if it came from the mouth of a furnace. It was now sunset, and on the height of Olivet the wind had risen to almost a gale, and it threatened, moreover, to rain. In so exposed a position our tents were all but certain to be blown down. The gates of the city being by this time closed for the night, it was no longer possible to get within its

walls. As the only alternative, we resolved, after a brief consultation, to take refuge in the house of the keeper of the mosque. Riding up to the door, accordingly, we made known our wishes, when straightway there appeared an old man with a long beard, and a green turban, significant of his sacred function as having the charge of a holy place, who seemed quite willing to grant us, on the usual terms everywhere perfectly well understood, the accommodation we sought. Aged and asthmatic as he was, he began immediately to bustle about among the members of his household to have the preparations needful for our reception made. He had, as he assured us through our interpreter, two excellent apartments, which we found, as usual, upon the very top of the house, and fully exposed therefore to all the winds of heaven.

Mounting up by a series of outside stairs, from the open court beneath, we at length reached our resting-place for the night. Of the apartments assigned to us, the smaller one was set apart as the sleeping place of our two ladies, while the larger was converted into the supper-room of the whole party. The windows being mere wooden lattices, and these opening out on three sides of this larger apartment, we soon discovered it to be a perfect temple of the winds, which howled through it amid the fast increasing darkness in such a fashion as not a little to remind us of some of our rougher nights at sea. We did our best, by nailing up rugs and railway wrappers against the lattices, to exclude the storm, though our success was not very complete.

The old man meanwhile provided us with some mats and divans, on which we gladly threw ourselves down. These we afterwards arranged on the naked stone floor, around the little low circular table, not more than a foot from the ground, which, after a weary hour's waiting, was at length set forth with our evening meal. We had thus an opportunity of realizing the ancient usage of reclining at the table. As for the dinner or supper—for to us it was both in one—it was a sorry affair, and did not tend to make us much in love with Syrian cookery. It

consisted of a pillau of greasy rice, with a few pieces of kid or goat, so tough that it was probably the latter, imbedded in the midst of it. This, and two or three pigeons seized and slain after our arrival, constituted our bill of fare. Hungry as we were, we made little hand of it, and but for some of our own good wholesome ship biscuit, with milk and a little wine, we should have been rather poorly off. It was not possible to avoid contrasting our somewhat comfortless position in this little gousty chamber with the good quarters we might have been enjoying in one of the hotels of the neighbouring city; and our somewhat romantic friend, whose glowing representations had brought us here, was plentifully scolded. There was now, however, no help for it, and we grew merry in our strange bivouac, over a state of things which made us greatly resemble a party of gipsies in a barn. After all, it was something to sup and sleep on the Mount of Olives, and something better still to send up, as we did, from this its loftiest summit, our evening song of praise; to read together out of His book solemn words which our Lord had spoken on this very hill; and to call upon His name so near the place from which, having finished His great work on earth, He ascended up to heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us.



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CHAPTER IV.

The Mount of Olives—A panoramic view from its summit—The Wilderness of Judah, the Dead Sea, and the Mountains of Moab, on the one side; Jerusalem on the other—The aspect of the city—Moriah—Zion—Akra—Bezetha—The adjacent valleys of Jehoshaphat, Hinnom, and Gihon—Limits of the ancient city—Historical questions connected with that subject—Position of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—Character of the country around the city—How altered from former times—Plan of proceedings for the day—A visit to Bethany—Gethsemane—Pool of Siloam—Valleys of Hinnom and Gihon—A ride round Zion and Moriah—Enter the city by Stephen's gate.

OUR quarters for the night on the Mount of Olives were by no means of a kind to create any danger of what is familiarly called "sleeping in." Whatever might be their other disadvantages, they were at least favourable to early rising. This excellent habit, indeed, is found by most travellers to be largely promoted by a tour in Syria. The night in that country, generally speaking, is a period not to be enjoyed but to be got through. Apart from other nocturnal discomforts which our tent life will by-and-bye explain, the unfortunate sleeper finds himself ere long at a banquet, not where he eats but where he is eaten. The position of Gulliver, when the Lilliputians caught him napping, and stuck him all over with pins, may help the uninitiated to form some idea of the assaults the sleeper has to sustain from his minute but multitudinous tormentors. I had found it, upon our voyage, to be a perfectly possible thing to be rocked into sound and refreshing slumber

"In cradle of the rude imperious surge,"

but none of us had yet acquired the art of bidding defiance to the old Egyptian plague.

The day, in consequence, had scarcely dawned when we emerged

from our comfortless chamber, and walked out upon the roof of the house to enjoy the delightful morning air and the magnificent view. As already explained, the house in which we had passed the night was that of the keeper of the adjacent mosque. That mosque stands on the site of what was called the Church of the Ascension—one of the many churches in and around Jerusalem which the Empress Helena gets the credit of having founded. This celebrated lady, the mother of Constantine, the first imperial convert to the Christian faith, came from Italy in the year 326, at the mature age, it is said, of fourscore, to visit the holy places at Jerusalem. Supported by the power and munificence of her son, she was enabled to indulge her piety, such as it was, by erecting places of Christian worship on the many sites which tradition had already appropriated as the scenes of the more memorable events in the history of our Lord. Nothing could more conclusively show how little reliance can be placed on the authorities she followed, than the fact of her planting the Church of the Ascension on the very summit of the Mount of Olives. Scripture expressly declares that Jesus led out the disciples "as far as to Bethany," and that *there*, while he was in the act of blessing them, "He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

Not only, therefore, is the tradition, as to the scene of the ascension, old though it be, expressly contradicted by the only infallible authority which exists upon the subject, but the tradition betrays its own worthlessness by the very grossness of the idea on which it evidently proceeds, that the way to heaven must needs be by the top of some high hill. To have taken His departure from this earth from a point so conspicuous, would have been to make His ascension an occasion of display. When He comes again it will, we know, be in circumstances of awful and universal publicity. Then "every eye shall see Him." But His going away was designedly private. It was meant to be seen by the apostles alone—those chosen men who were to be witnesses unto Him both in Jerusalem and in Judea

and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. It would have been obviously and altogether out of keeping with such a design to have selected, as the scene of His ascension, a height like Olivet, in full view of the whole city, the most conspicuous place in all the country round. Nothing, on the other hand, could be in more perfect harmony with that design than His ascending from Bethany. Often, in the days of His flesh, He had sought that sequestered retreat at eventide, after toiling all day long in the adjacent city. And there is something both sweet and suggestive in the thought that He should have bent His steps to the same hallowed spot when about to enter into His eternal and glorious rest above.

Entertaining these views, we rejected at once the proposal to enter the mosque and inspect the pretended footmark in the rock inclosed within its walls, which a miserable monkish legend would have it believed was actually imprinted there by our Lord's latest step on the face of the earth. There is nothing, indeed, by which one is so disgusted and irritated in the Holy Land, as by the falsehoods and follies which priestcraft and superstition have accumulated around many of its most sacred stories and scenes. Happily, however, with the unalterable face of nature before him, and that truest and grandest of all guide-books—the Bible—in his hand, the traveller, as we shall see, can easily emancipate himself from the trammels of mere tradition; and as regards very many at least of the most eventful and interesting localities in Judea, can satisfy himself beyond dispute that he is not deceived.

Of the truth of this general statement, a more satisfactory or comprehensive illustration could nowhere be found, than on the precise spot where we were now assembled. Close alongside of our sleeping apartment, there was an entrance into the minaret of the mosque. Mounting up its narrow cork-screw stair, and coming out upon the open gallery which encircles it near the summit, we proceeded to survey the glorious and far-reaching prospect that lay around us on every hand. Let it be under-

stood that here we are standing at an elevation of 2800 feet above the level of the sea, and overtopping every other eminence near us. Zion, the very highest part of Jerusalem, is more than 200 feet beneath us. From so singularly advantageous a position, let us try what we can see.

And, *first*, let us turn to the east, in the direction of the rising sun. What is that long straight line on the verge of the horizon, like a sea-coast, floating high up in the air? It is the ridge of the mountains of Moab. The mist that hangs over the deep hollow of the Jordan valley beneath hides entirely at present the lower part of the mountain range, and only the sky-line of its far extending summit is now visible. Down below that line, and gleaming out brightly from under the dreamy haze that occupies the intervening space, is a noble sheet of water. That is the Dead Sea. The gulf in which it lies is fully 4000 feet lower than where we stand. Between us and that strange abyss, the distance, in a direct line, is about sixteen or eighteen miles; and a wilder or more rugged scene than that intervening country exhibits, it is not easy to conceive. It is the wilderness of Judah—a perfect picture of sterility and desolation; but having in its very loneliness and barrenness a certain savage grandeur which powerfully impresses the mind. There is some verdure, indeed, in its deep hollows and ravines—at least in that part of it which is nearest to the Mount of Olives; but its prevailing aspect, and more especially as it approaches the margin of that stupendous crevasse whose depths the Dead Sea fills, is naked and savage in the extreme.

This desolate region extends far away to the south, overhanging, with its broad belt of rugged and desert table-land, the whole western side of that celebrated sea. Westward of this wilderness, and due south from the Mount of Olives, the hill country has a greener and fresher look. The most conspicuous object in that direction is the Frank Mountain; so called from a tradition that the Franks, or Crusaders, had made their last stand here after they had been finally driven from the Holy

City. The tradition seems to have considerable support in history; and, at any rate, the mountain itself, rising up sharp and strongly defined like some volcanic island amid the undulating sea of hills that stretches on all sides around it, forms a striking feature in this great mountain landscape. One of the most remarkable and characteristic features of this landscape, is the number of deep and narrow ravines with which it is furrowed and scarred. These, for the most part, after many turnings and windings among the hills, bend away eastwards and lose themselves on the shores of the Dead Sea. They abound, especially about half-way down the western side of that sea, in the district of Engedi, where David so often and so successfully hid himself from the pursuit and the persecution of Saul. Northwards from the Mount of Olives, the appearance of the country is much the same as that which it presents on the south—a vast succession of gray, rocky, rounded hills.

But now let us turn to the west—for on this side lies the chief charm of the view from Olivet. South, east, and north, all is naked and bare, deserted and desolate, with hardly so much as one solitary human habitation to be seen. Looking in these directions one might suppose himself to be surveying an absolutely uninhabited country. But the instant we turn our back to the east, we find ourselves among the abodes of living men, for on the west Jerusalem itself is lying, so to speak, at our feet. From this commanding height we can take in at a glance the entire length and breadth of the city, and form, at the same time, a clear idea of the singular and most picturesque site on which it stands. Nor can any one, looking on it, hesitate to confess that "beautiful for situation is Mount Zion."

Its position at once explains how it came to be so early fixed upon as a place for the founding of a city. Nature had framed it to be a stronghold. It was already a royal residence in the days of Abraham; for here, doubtless, was that Salem from which Melchisedec came forth to meet the venerable patriarch on his return from the slaughter of the confederate kings of the

East. And we further know, that when the posterity of Abraham came, long afterwards, out of Egypt to take possession of the land, the king of Jerusalem was one of those Canaanite chiefs whom Joshua so signally discomfited in the valley of Ajalon, and whom he subsequently slew at the cave of Makkedah, to which they had fled. Nor can we doubt that the same reasons which had recommended the site to these ancient rulers, recommended it to David when that experienced warrior chose it for the capital of his kingdom.

The area on which it stands, for at least four-fifths of its entire circuit, is surrounded by deep valleys, which must always have made that large proportion of its circumference easily defensible. From the summit of the Mount of Olives we are now, in surveying the city, looking right across one of these valleys. It is the valley of Jehoshaphat. This valley begins on the north side of the city, and at a considerable distance from the present city wall. At this upper part of its course the valley is not very deep: it is little more, in fact, than a gentle hollow, but it deepens continually as it proceeds. At first it runs in an easterly direction till it meets the northern part of the Mount of Olives, and then it turns abruptly round to the south. This southerly course of the valley continues along the entire eastern face of Jerusalem, and forms the mighty trench which, on that side, nature has dug for the defence of the city. At the south-eastern angle of the city, another valley, coming down from the west, falls at this point into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and so as completely to guard the city on the south. This is the valley of Hinnom. Ascending this valley westwards, it becomes, at a certain point, the valley of Gihon, where it begins to incline towards the north-west, thus sweeping, in its upward course, round the south and south-western quarters of the city.

The space between this upper part of the valley of Gihon, and the upper part of the valley of Jehoshaphat, is a kind of *plateau*, on a level with the city, and stretches away in a north-westerly direction, into what is now the open country;

and in this direction there can be no doubt the ancient city extended greatly beyond the line of the present wall. On this side alone, indeed, as the preceding description plainly indicates, was extension possible. Round all the rest of its circumference Jerusalem is now, and must ever have been, hemmed in by the deep valleys which encompass it. Standing, as we now are, so high above the city, we can trace the course of these encircling valleys along its northern, eastern, southern, and south-western sides, and can embrace, at the same time, a considerable part of the country across and beyond the city altogether.

As regards the city itself, although there are still many points connected with its topography that have never yet been conclusively or satisfactorily settled, there are others which even from the Mount of Olives can be easily and unmistakeably identified. First and foremost of these is Mount Moriah, the site of the ancient temple. Let it be remembered, that looking, as we are now doing, from the Mount of Olives across the valley of Jehoshaphat, we have, right in front of us, the eastern wall of the city. Near the centre of that wall is the gate of Stephen, otherwise called the gate of Mary, or the gate of the Tribes. From this gate, onwards to its southern extremity, the wall runs along the outer edge of Moriah, and bounds on this side the vast area of the ancient inclosures of the temple. On the opposite or western side of that area, the eye can still, without difficulty, trace a hollow rising up at its south end, from near the mouth of the valley of Hinnom, and passing into the city between Moriah and the still higher eminence of Zion that rises beyond it. This hollow was the valley of the *Tyropæon*, spanned in ancient times by that magnificent viaduct erected by Solomon, and by which he passed forth from his palace upon Zion to the temple upon Moriah.

It was the sight, among other things, of this viaduct—this “ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord”—that so impressed the Queen of Sheba with Solomon’s greatness “that there was no more spirit in her.” Of this noble work, so sug-

gestive at once of Solomon's splendour and of his piety, unequivocal remains have been recently discovered. The valley which this viaduct crossed is now so filled up with the rubbish of the ancient city, and with the filth and refuse poured into it in the course of centuries, that its course becomes somewhat uncertain as it advances into the interior of the present city. Even from the Mount of Olives, however, it is still sufficiently discernible to mark off unequivocally the limits of Mount Moriah. As Olivet is from two to three hundred feet higher than Moriah, our present point of view enables us to overlook the wall which incloses it, and to range over the entire area within. That area is upwards of 500 yards, or fully two-sevenths of a mile in length; and nearly 350 yards, or one-fifth of a mile in breadth. This entire space is called the Haram, "the holy," and sometimes the Haram-es-Sherif, or "the noble sanctuary." About the centre of this sacred inclosure stands the Kubbet-es-Sukkrâh, or "dome of the rock"—more commonly called the Mosque of Omar—an immense octagonal building, surmounted by a dome of gigantic proportions. This edifice is now the chief glory of the city in the eyes of its Moslem population. There it stands, that stately temple of the False Prophet, on the very site where Solomon built the House of the Lord, as if more impressively to tell that Jerusalem is still trodden down of the Gentiles.

There is another mosque, that of El-Aksa, or "the extremity" a name descriptive of its position on the southern verge of Moriah; and there are several smaller ones along the sides of the Haram. The inclosure, as a whole, has the look of a large and handsome esplanade. Its broad walks, and rows of trees, and long arcades and cloisters, all arranged in goodly order around the stately mosque, impart to it an air of beauty and entireness which strongly contrasts with the utter confusion and dilapidation that so painfully characterize the adjacent city.

Looking beyond this inclosure, which occupies the whole of Mount Moriah, let us now survey the city at large. Josephus

describes Jerusalem as built chiefly on two hills, but partly also on a third. Of the two former hills, that, he says, "which contains the upper city is much higher, and in length more direct," and "was called the citadel of King David." This, of course, was Mount Zion. The other of those two principal hills, he says, "was called Akra, and sustains the lower city, and is of the shape of a moon when she is horned." The third and lesser hill, he describes as situated "over against" Akra, but "naturally lower than it;" and he further speaks of it as "parted formerly from the other by a broad valley."* It is not easy to discover, from the narrative of Josephus, whether "the other" from which this third hill was formerly parted was Akra alone, or the whole *other city*—both Zion and Akra included. The latter, however, seems, on the whole, the likelier meaning. As regards the valley itself, he distinctly states that it had been filled up with earth by the Asmonæans—the princes of the family of the Maccabees; and further, that "they took off part of the height of Akra, and reduced it to be of less elevation than it was before, that the temple might be superior to it." It is abundantly obvious that these operations, not to speak of the changes that have been subsequently wrought by time, and by the still more terrible hand of war, must have made it extremely difficult to adjust, at the present day, the topography of the ancient city. Nothing, accordingly, can be more endless than the disputes to which this subject has given rise. Hardly any two travellers are at one regarding it. The only one of the three hills of Josephus about which there is, and can be, no difference of opinion is Zion, or that which, he says, was called "the citadel of King David." There is no mistaking it. It is the natural citadel of the place. Not only does it completely overtop all the other heights on which the city stands, but it is the only one of these heights which nature has fortified all round. The valleys of Gihon, Hinnom, and the Tyropeon, may be said to entrench it on every side. It occupies, as we

* *Jewish Wars*, book v. chap. iv. 1.

spacious inclosures; and *next*, the city itself spreading out behind, and at the same time outflanking or overlapping Moriah on either hand. There are few outstanding or prominent objects upon the general face of the city. The heights of Zion, on the extreme left, crowned with the large white Armenian convent, with the present castle of Jerusalem and, close beside it, with the gray, solid tower of Hippicus, as old as the times of the later Hebrew monarchy, still suggest the idea of Zion's ancient character as "the citadel of King David." In the more central part of the city, the most noticeable edifice is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with its tall campanile towers and its lofty dome. It needs no second look, even from the Mount of Olives, to satisfy any intelligent and unprejudiced observer that the tradition, which has located the scene of our Lord's crucifixion and burial *there*, is quite as little worthy of respect as that which placed the scene of His ascension on the apex of the Mount of Olives.

Our Lord "suffered without the gate." The evangelist Matthew says, they "led him away to crucify him, and as they *came out* they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear the cross" (xxviii. 31, 32). Referring to the same incident, Luke relates, that, "as they led him away, they laid hold upon Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus." These passages plainly prove two things: *first*, that they were already emerging from the city when they met the Cyrenian coming out of the country and approaching the town; and *next*, that they had still a considerable distance to go before reaching Calvary—seeing that they found it necessary to relieve the Saviour's sinking frame of the load of the cross, and to have it borne by another. No arguments can reconcile with these facts a tradition which places Calvary within the city. It has been argued, indeed, by those who are bent at all hazards on supporting that extravagant tradition, that the city, strictly so called, was the *original* city; and that the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was outside of the

inner wall by which that more ancient city was bounded. Even this last refuge, however, of a desperate argument, has utterly failed. It has been demonstrated, by careful measurement, that that older wall could never have followed such a course as would leave the site in question outside of it. There is really no need however, in order to settle this controversy, to go into these minuter investigations. Nothing more is necessary for that purpose than to look, as we are now doing from Olivet, at the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre rising from what is at this moment, and from what must much more at the time of the crucifixion have been, the very heart of the city. It is impossible to make such a locality correspond with the explicit statements of the infallible Word, which describe the procession to Calvary as going forth from the city—as meeting, after leaving it, a man coming out of the country; and compelling him to turn back with them and to bear the cross after Jesus. Calvary, therefore, must have been without the gate, not in the sense in which the *Strand* is outside of *Temple Bar*, but in the sense in which the country is outside of the town.

The entire circumference of the city, as carefully measured along the wall, is 4326 yards, or very nearly two and a half English miles. Its greatest diameter—which is from Zion gate, on the south, to the north end of the eastern wall—is considerably upwards of a mile. This comparatively limited area could not possibly have contained the population of the ancient city. It is, indeed, much too large for its present inhabitants, whose numbers hardly any one rates higher than 19,000; and, accordingly, a great part of the space which the modern wall incloses is now unoccupied, save by rubbish and ruins, with occasional patches of corn and thickets of prickly pear. But that space, however densely peopled, could not possibly have afforded room for the population of the city such as it was in the days of its ancient prosperity and glory. Eleven hundred thousand Jews are said by Josephus to have fallen, in and around it, in the course of the memorable siege by Titus and the Roman army; a siege which

as an actual eye-witness, the Jewish historian so vividly describes. And though multitudes of those who perished were not regular dwellers in Jerusalem, but had come up thither from the country to attend the great annual feast of the passover, still to furnish them, in addition to the stationary inhabitants, with accommodation of any kind, must have demanded more ample bounds than those of the present city. In surveying the site of the city, occasion has been already taken to observe that only in one direction could it ever have admitted of any considerable extension—namely, along the comparatively level ground outside of the north-western wall. Zion, no doubt, if all included within the walls, as it must have been in ancient times, would add considerably to the dimensions of the city. But as the city grew, the chief extension must have taken place in the quarter already indicated. There, accordingly, traces of the *third* wall of Josephus, and other unequivocal remains of that larger city, have been discovered. Of these I shall have occasion to speak at a future period; but meanwhile, my object is simply to illustrate and to render somewhat more intelligible and instructive the general panoramic view of the city we are now taking from the Mount of Olives. At present the plateau, outside the north-west wall, which the extended city must have covered in ancient times, has very much the look of a wide-spreading and well-wooded park. It is dark with numerous olive groves, while the intervening spaces, as seen by us, were green with the growing corn that clothed its stony soil.

And now that we have taken this bird's-eye view of Jerusalem and its more immediate environs, let us enlarge a little our circle of vision, so as to embrace the *setting* of this once brilliant gem—the *entourage* of the Holy City. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever" (Psalm cxxv. 2). Words so suggestive naturally lead most persons who visit Jerusalem to look for these encircling hills. We are not to forget, indeed, that they are the words of poetry—inspired poetry though it be—and not

therefore to be taken in that prosaic and strictly literal sense which some travellers insist upon; and who, in consequence of their own mistake, find themselves involved in a certain measure of disappointment when they survey the actual scene. Jerusalem does not lie in the hollow of an amphitheatre. It is placed, on the contrary, as already explained, on an eminence, with deep valleys running nearly all round it. But true it is, notwithstanding, that the mountains girdle it about, as the Psalmist describes. On two sides, the north and east, it is enfolded by the Mount of Olives, on which we at present stand. On the south, the Hill of Evil Counsel, so called as being the reputed site of the country palace of Caiaphas the high-priest, where the conspirators against our Lord met on the night of his seizure in the Garden of Gethsemane, overhangs the valley of Hinnom, and looks right over it upon Mount Zion. And although upon the west the hills are at a greater distance, it is on that side they are highest of all. In that direction are Ramah and Gibeon, and not farther away than five or six miles is the remarkable height known by the name of Neby Samwil. Upon that height tradition tells that Samuel the prophet was buried. Of the truth of this statement there is no evidence whatever in history, either sacred or profane: but recent inquiries and observations seem to have proved it to be the site of the ancient Mizpeh of Saul. Mizpeh means the watch-tower, and the name answers well to the summit of a hill which may be said to overlook the whole country of Benjamin and no small part of Judah. Standing on the top of Neby Samwil, the eye ranges from Jaffa and the Mediterranean Sea on the west, to the Jordan valley and the mountains of Ammon and Moab beyond it on the east. But while the position of these hills abundantly warrants and justifies the descriptive language of the Psalmist, that language was probably never meant to be understood in so narrow and restricted a sense as the confining it to these particular hills would imply. It is enough, both to vindicate and to explain that language, that Jerusalem is in the heart of a

mountain-land, and that, for nearly twenty miles on every side, there is nothing around it but hills. Through that extensive tract of mountain country must every enemy have approached who designed to assail Jerusalem—a country difficult to pass and easy to defend. It is only, indeed, when the words in question are taken in this more extended sense that the illustration they are meant to give of the security that encompasses the people of God comes out in all its beauty and force. It is substantially the same idea which is presented by the prophet Isaiah when he says of the man that walketh righteously, "He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks" (Isaiah xxxiii. 16).

The morning was singularly favourable for this panoramic view. The scirocco of the preceding day was gone. The wind during the night had shifted to the north-west; and save in the valley of the Jordan, where the remains of the haze of yesterday still lingered, the atmosphere was so transparent that even the remotest parts of the landscape could be distinctly seen. Descending at length, and reluctantly, from the minaret, and assembling in the larger of the two apartments, we read together at our morning worship the latter half of Luke xix., containing the record of our Lord's public entrance into the Holy City, and of his touching lamentation over its coming ruin. The lattices of our attic chamber were now all thrown open; the one in front, looking right over upon Mount Moriah and Jerusalem, the others, on the right and left, looking, the one up, and the other down, the deep valley of Jehoshaphat. It can need no stretch of imagination to conceive the unwonted emotion which the reading of the Scripture narrative in such a position inspired. It was from these very depths beneath us the shout rose up from the rejoicing multitude of "Hosannah to the Son of David;" and it was from the slope of this very Mount of Olives that Jesus proclaimed the approaching destruction of the city. We had but to lift our eyes for a moment from the sacred page to be reminded how truly and how terribly His prophecy had

been fulfilled:—"For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Mourn, Salem! mourn! Low lies thine humbled state;
Thy glittering fanes are levelled with the ground;
Fallen is thy pride—thine halls are desolate!
Where erst was heard the timbrel's sprightly sound,
And frolic pleasure tripped the nightly round.
There breeds the wild fox lonely, and aghast
Stands the mute pilgrim at the void profound;
Unbroke by noise—save when the hurrying blast
Sighs, like a spirit, deep along the cheerless waste!

It is for this, proud Solyma, thy towers
Lie crumbling in the dust; for this, forlorn
Thy genius wails along thy desert bowers;
While stern destruction laughs, as if in scorn,
That thou didst dare insult God's eldest born;
And with most bitter persecuting ire
Pursued his footsteps, till the last day-dawn
Rose on his fortunes—and thou saw'st the Fire
That came to light the world, in one great flash expire!

Eighteen hundred years have passed away and Jerusalem is a desolation still; and the chosen race that dwelt in it continue to this hour without a country, a city, or a home.

Tribes of the wandering foot, and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest;—
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country, Israel but the grave!

Scarcely had we finished our early morning meal, when we were surprised and gladdened by the appearance of the Rev. Mr. Hefter, missionary of the London Jewish Society, and one of

the clergy connected with Dr. Gobat, the estimable bishop of Jerusalem. Having heard that our party were to arrive on the preceding evening, and to spend our first night on the Mount of Olives, he had ridden over in quest of us, and after looking about for our tents in vain, had at last hunted us up in the house of the mosque. He had come, not to pay us the mere passing compliment of a friendly greeting, but to place himself at our disposal as a guide to the many interesting localities around and within the city. In doing so he was conferring on us an invaluable service—for a more competent or agreeable guide it was impossible to have. Speaking Arabic with the fluency of a native, familiar with Jerusalem and with the whole adjacent country, well acquainted, both with the old, and often worthless, traditions of the place, and with the more reliable observations and discoveries of modern times, he enabled us to accomplish in a week, as much as ordinary travellers, without such leadership, could hope to achieve in a month.

Knowing that our time was limited, he set himself at once to sketch a plan of operations for the day; and no sooner was it arranged than we proceeded to carry it into effect. According to this plan we were first to visit Bethany, taking the direct road down the east side of Olivet. Then to return towards the city by the Jericho road, round the shoulder of the hill as far as to the Garden of Gethsemane. From that point to go down the valley of Jehoshaphat, to the Pool of Siloam, and onwards to Enrogel—the well of the spies. Next to turn westwards up the valley of Hinnom and Gihon, as far as the Jaffa gate. And lastly, keeping still outside of the city, to skirt along the wall across the hill of Zion, the valley of the Tyropœon and Ophel, to the south end of Moriah; and then turning northwards, and advancing along the outside of the temple inclosure, to enter the city by St. Stephen's gate. This route, full of interest at every step of its progress, would show us in detail, and close at hand, many of the scenes of which already we had been enjoying a far-off view; and thus enable us to *fill in* some part, at least, of that



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more comprehensive sketch *in outline*, which we had been making from Olivet, of the environs of the city.

Having despatched the mukharis, about 8 A.M., with the baggage-horses to the city, we set out at once on this exciting tour. As we got into the saddle at the gate of the mosque, the entire population of the adjacent village turned out to have a look at us and to beg. When the customary cry of such a rabble for *Buksheesh* is not answered to the Syrian taste, it is very apt to be exchanged for the favourite salutation of the fanatic Moslem—"dog of a Nazarene." Whether this happened on the Mount of Olives I am not quite certain; but I am very sure it happened to us in many other places as we passed through the land. Among the assembled crowd was a very striking figure, in the shape of a Nubian horseman, black as an Ethiop should be, well mounted, and fully armed; and having the wild, free, reckless air of a true son of the desert.

He and his little but compact and fiery Arab steed, seemed all of a piece. Though the hill top was rocky and rough in the extreme, he galloped furiously to and fro, reining his horse up often when at the top of his speed, his long spear, now resting on his foot, now poised above his head in the air, apparently to let us Franks see the stuff he was made of. He was the first specimen of a black trooper we had seen, and we watched his dashing evolutions with the greater interest in consequence. Nor is it possible for those who have not seen it to imagine how picturesque and warlike a figure the sable African can make, when thus suitably equipped and attired; his coal-black visage contrasting most effectively with the dazzling whiteness of his voluminous turban and loosely girt *abey*. He was probably some retainer in the personal service of the Pasha, or of some other Syrian chief.

The path we now followed led us along the southern edge of the summit of the hill, and then conducted us by a winding course down its eastern side; the view beneath and before us as we descended, being the same we had just surveyed from the

minaret of the mosque. Tradition could neither aid nor mislead us here. In a mountain country more especially, nature shapes out the roads that men must take. The same reasons that recommend a particular track to the men of the present day, recommended it to those who lived thousands of years ago.

In making the railway to our Scottish metropolis, our engineers have laid it down, for the first twenty miles beyond the city of Glasgow, alongside of the great canal, the line of water communication that was formed last century; and that canal, as is well known, followed, as nearly as possible, the course of the old Roman wall, built more than sixteen hundred years before the canal was dug. It was neither chance, nor caprice, nor antiquarian taste that set the navy of our days aworking in the very footprints of the soldiers of Antoninus. It was the *lie* of the country that did it. The levels between the Forth and Clyde that best suited Roman strategy in the second century, best suited, for a similar reason, the railway engineer in the nineteenth. Considerations of precisely the same kind lead the present inhabitants of Jerusalem, when they wish to take a short cut across the Mount of Olives to Bethany, to pursue the very paths that were trodden in the times of our Lord.

It was, accordingly, without a shadow of distrust we yielded ourselves to the touching and solemnizing thought that we were now treading the very ground that was often pressed by the footsteps of the Saviour of the world. We were now going where He often went—to Bethany, “the town of Mary and her sister Martha”—the home of Lazarus his friend. It is an interesting circumstance to find that to its connection with that honoured family—or rather to their connection with Jesus—the village owes the name by which alone it is now known among the natives of the country. They call it El-Aziryah, a name plainly derived from Lazarus. Its ancient name of Bethany, signifying the “house of dates,” has disappeared, like the date-palm from which, no doubt, that name was taken. That graceful tree is now nowhere to be seen upon the mount, though the

fact that formerly it abounded here is sufficiently attested by the well-known circumstance that the multitude who attended Jesus, when he made his triumphal entrance into the city, "took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him." At present the olive and the fig, and these in most parts only at distant intervals, are the only trees to be met with on the Mount of Olives. In the more prosperous days of old, ere yet the divine wrath had been poured out upon the land, the now comparatively naked hill must have been clad with a far richer and more varied foliage. In the book of Nehemiah we read of the people going "forth into the mount," to fetch "olive branches and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees," to make booths at the feast of tabernacles. How different a city must Jerusalem have been when the rugged heights around it were all softened and beautified by these umbrageous and many-tinted woods. Strip our own Trosachs, or Dunkelds, or Kenmores of their leafy covering; hew down the birch, the mountain-ash, the oak, the pine, and expose the naked hill-sides to such a sun as glares down upon the mountains of Judah, and what Scotchman would be able to recognize, in the desolate and sterile region that remained, the once glorious scenery that was the pride of his native land.

It is such a change that has passed over the land of Israel. The moisture that was retained long in the soil by the forest shade disappears in a day, now that the shade is gone; and hence the comparative barrenness that now reigns where, in other times, all was fruitfulness and beauty. It needed no miraculous physical change of either climate or soil to bring about this deterioration of the country. It needed only that it should be given up, as under the righteous judgments of God it has been, to rude and lawless men—to rapine and misrule—to ceaseless wars and never-ending civil broils.

Occupied with such reflections as these, we have now reached a sequestered hollow in the eastern lap of the hill. It is the only spot all around in which something of that ancient verdure

and beauty we have been calling up in imagination from the distant past continues to linger. It is Bethany. The hamlet of eighteen or twenty houses, built evidently with the stones of other and older and more imposing edifices, is still embowered in its little grove of trees; and the fig and the olive, the almond, the pear, and the pomegranate still flourish in the orchards beside it. There is about the place altogether something of that look of both sweetness and seclusion which one loves to associate with this chosen retreat of our blessed Lord.

It certainly adds nothing to its attractions, however, to find ready waiting to pounce upon you as you approach it, some stupid or selfish monk who undertakes to conduct you to the identical house of Simon the leper, or to that of Mary and Martha, or to the tomb from which Lazarus was summoned forth by the voice of Him who is the resurrection and the life. It is bad enough to be pestered with such a nuisance as a self-appointed "commissionaire" in Antwerp or Paris, but to meet such a character amid the ruins of Bethany, is a thing to excite mingled feelings of disgust and pity—disgust at the profanation, and pity for the ignorance it implies. There is not one really ancient house in the village; and as for the pretended tomb of Lazarus, it has no resemblance to the tombs of Hebrew times. It is situated deep down beneath one of the houses in the main street of Bethany, the access to it being by a steep stair of four and twenty steps, whereas the real tomb of Lazarus appears evidently, from the Scripture narrative, to have been at some distance from the town. We gave ourselves accordingly no concern about these monkish legends. This was beyond all question Bethany, and that was enough. It is impossible to picture a scene of more complete retirement. Though not more than two miles from Jerusalem, it seems to lie in the midst of a perfect solitude. The intervening heights of the Mount of Olives shut out all sight and sound of the city as thoroughly as if it were a hundred miles away. From Bethany itself nothing is seen but the lonely region lying between it and the Dead Sea, with the

lofty wall of the mountains of Moab beyond it, and shutting up the view. It is just such a spot as one would choose for rest and retirement when sick of the strife of tongues, and of the noise and turmoil of a gainsaying and disobedient people.

The only trace of a human habitation that can be seen from Bethany, in looking abroad over the desolate region that spreads out before it, is the village of Abû-Dis, which straggles along the ridge of an eminence at the distance of less than a mile, across a deep rugged intervening valley. Some travellers have supposed this village to be the Bethphage of Scripture, which is impossible. Though the language of Scripture is somewhat indefinite as to the relative position of Bethany and Bethphage, it is plain that they stood somewhere on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, and that the road from Jericho to Jerusalem passed through them both. Now, Abû-Dis is not on the Mount of Olives, and the road to Jerusalem does not pass through it, and never could have done so. As regards Bethany itself, the Jericho road by which our Lord approached it, when coming up for the last time to the city, goes right through it; and it was by this same road that, after spending the night in Bethany, he next day continued his course to the Holy City. We are now about to follow in his steps. Alas! how much easier it is to do so in this literal sense, than morally and spiritually to walk as Christ also walked. It will be the best thing we can get in Palestine, if we learn in tracing His route on that eventful day, to drink deeper into his divine spirit of self-denying devotedness to the will of Him that sent him!

In leaving Bethany to proceed along the Jericho road towards the Holy City, even the dullest imagination could hardly fail to be aroused. What a contrast did the ruined village and the solitariness of the whole scene, as we saw it, present to the spectacle that must have been exhibited there eighteen centuries ago, when the guest of Simon the leper set out on his way to Jerusalem. His brief stay at Bethany had already gathered a multitude around him. The fact having become known that

He was coming up to the feast, crowds had flocked forth from the city to meet Him:—"Much people of the Jews knew that he was there, and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also whom he had raised from the dead." Never, perhaps, before had the quiet and sequestered village of Bethany been so thronged as on that memorable day. The road from thence to the city runs along the back of the Mount of Olives, passing over those rocky ridges, and winding round the edge of those deep ravines which give so rugged and picturesque a character to its eastern side, and gradually ascending to that southern shoulder of the hill, where suddenly and for the first time the Temple and the city burst into view.

At a certain point in this road, apparently not far beyond the village of Bethany, Jesus paused in his course. "When they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied and a colt with her: loose them and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them." Though himself Lord of all, He condescends to make himself a debtor, for this little service He requires, to some humble peasant, of whom we know not even the name. And yet in the very act of doing so, He reminds the thoughtful observer that He is more and greater than He seems. By the preciseness of the information He gives to His messengers, He betrays the possession of a knowledge from which nothing is concealed. While the answer he instructs them to make to those by whom their proceedings might be questioned, bespeaks the consciousness of sovereign right and power. They go in obedience to His commands, and everything falls out according to His word. "They brought the ass and the colt, and they put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon."

And now as they move on, seemingly without any preconcerted arrangement the multitude begin spontaneously, and by one

common impulse, to take the form of a great public procession. The fame which had gone before Him to Jerusalem of His miracles and mighty deeds, had for some time been powerfully stirring the popular mind, and preparing it to anticipate, in connection with His approaching and expected appearance at the feast, the realization of those fond hopes so long cherished among them with reference to their national Messiah. What the disciples had now done, and the attitude their Master had now assumed, like the spark that fires the ready-laid train, would seem to have flashed home a sudden conviction to every mind that *here* was the very scene which long before Zechariah had prophetically described. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Seized by this soul-moving thought, and hurried into a transport of enthusiasm, "a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in the way." While these strong emotions are thrilling every bosom in this mighty company, they have reached the first turning of the hill, and mount Zion has for a moment opened into sight. Their feelings can no longer be restrained. Shouts that seem to shake the mountain burst forth on all sides, and roll like the noise of coming thunder along the hills. For "when Jesus was come nigh, even now *at the descent* of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest. . . . Hosanna to the Son of David: Hosanna in the highest."

We were now upon the track of this triumphal procession, and as the magic wand of local association conjured it up before the mental eye, it needs not to say what a surpassing interest it lent to every step of our course. The road bears all the marks of one that has been used for ages. The nature of the ground

indeed is such, that only in the line which the present road follows could a road be made at all, hemmed in as it is between deep ravines on the one hand, and the steep hill-side on the other. Here and there the limestone rock has evidently been cut down to a lower level to make the ascent more easy; and in the roadway itself, the rocky bottom in most places is so grooved into ruts and hollows by the tear and wear of time, as to make it difficult and even dangerous to ride without more attention to one's horse than, in such circumstances, it is agreeable to be obliged to give. The truth of this remark was illustrated somewhat unpleasantly on the spot, and at the expense of one of our party. Forgetful of his horse, amid the absorbing excitement of the scene, the animal, left to itself, had got out of the deep narrow track in the middle of the road, and was slanting up the rocky slope alongside of it, when, losing its footing on the smooth and slippery surface, horse and man came down with a crash into the old rut again.

Dr. Robinson favours the opinion that Bethphage lay to the east of Bethany; but the Scripture narrative seems rather to imply that its position was somewhere between Bethany and the city. There is a sweet and sheltered hollow into which the road descends, about half a mile nearer to Jerusalem than Bethany, which one could very well fancy to have been the site of its twin village of Bethphage. This name signifies "the house of green figs;" and in the valley below the spot now indicated, fig trees are still numerous; and they are said, moreover, to yield the earliest and the best figs anywhere to be found in the neighbourhood of the city.* At the point where the road crosses the upper extremity of this little valley recollections of home were suddenly awakened by the sight of a fine hawthorn tree, covered all over with the beautiful white drapery of its fragrant flowers. It was but a momentary though a pleasing digression from the main stream of thought which swept us along in the train of the

* In the recent work of Dr. J. T. Barclay, issued since the above sentence was written, this very spot is identified with Bethphage.

procession of our Lord. The narrative of Luke on that subject seems to point to two distinct stages in the progress of that procession, each of which was the occasion and the scene of a separate and striking incident.

First, it is said, "when He was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice." It was here the shout arose, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." Now, it is most interesting to observe that, precisely at the point where the road rounds one of the sloping ridges of the hill, and first begins to descend towards the west, a glimpse is at the same moment obtained of the heights of Zion. As yet, Moriah and the city are concealed by another ridge of Olivet, a little more in advance: but through a hollow in that second ridge Zion comes here into view. How natural to suppose that it was the sight of that "citadel of King David" suddenly appearing before them as they reached this point of the road, that called forth the exulting cry of "Hosanna to the Son of David."

Beyond this point the road falls gradually down to a lower level, and Zion disappears, hid by that second ridge which the road begins soon after to ascend. In this hollow it most probably was that, when the tumultuous shouting of the rejoicing multitude had subsided, the sullen and censorious Pharisees found leisure to strike in with their complaint, when Jesus said to them,—in reply to their querulous demand that he should rebuke his disciples,—“I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” Meanwhile they are advancing up the short but rapid ascent that will bring them all at once full in view of the city. At this part of the road our feelings were strung to the highest pitch of excitement. We knew that we were on the point of arriving at the very spot where one of the most touching incidents in the Saviour's history occurred, and we watched, in consequence, with intensest eagerness for the opening out of the expected scene that would enable us to identify the very spot to which these well-known words

referred:—"And when he was come *near*, he *beheld the city*, and wept over it." No one who has followed that road, with the sacred narrative in his hand, can have a moment's hesitation as to where this event occurred. With a suddenness almost startling, the rocky ridge which hitherto has hidden all that lies beyond it, is turned, and, as if it had risen up out of the earth, Jerusalem spreads out before us. We are now on the very edge of the deep and narrow valley of Jehoshaphat, right over against the southern extremity of Moriah. Here the magnificent temple which crowned it of old must have met the Saviour's eye, the stately city lying in all its grandeur around it. It is the very and the only point which answers unmistakeably to the descriptive terms of the sacred narrative: "When he was come *near*, he beheld the city." It is so near as to be almost within a bow-shot, and yet it is the first point in the road where the city could be beheld. One may be deceived as to the precise locality of many Scripture scenes, but not as to this one. Standing here, one has the feeling of absolute certainty that he is on the very spot of ground where the deep and tender compassions of Jesus overflowed in tears at the thought of the coming ruin of Jerusalem and the Jews.

It is quite true that the really important thing in such a case, is the fact itself which the evangelist relates, and not the mere circumstance of its having happened at this particular place. At the same time, no thoughtful mind can fail both to understand and to appreciate the intense satisfaction one finds in tracing out such incidental and yet unequivocal marks of a perfect correspondence between the story and the scene. They carry in them a most impressive testimony to the reality of the events which the sacred historian describes. The confirmation may not be needed. We may be altogether independent of it. Nevertheless, it is delightful to have it. Though one has never for a moment doubted the truth of the Scripture history, he cannot but feel, as he journeys on through the Holy Land, that his confidence in the reality of that history is deepened and strength-

ened at every step of his progress. With the Bible in his hand, and the land before him, he sees that, as face answereth to face in a glass, so does that which is written in the pages of the sacred record answer to that which is written on the face of Judea. This most precious conviction, ever growing in clearness and force within his bosom, is among the best rewards of his pains and toil which the traveller in that country can hope or desire to receive.

At this turn of the hill we have, high above us on the right, that summit of the Mount of Olives on which we had passed the previous night; and on the left another eminence, but considerably lower, and commonly called the Mount of Offence. It was on this latter height that Solomon is believed to have erected the altars to the false gods after whom his wives led him astray. If the tradition be well founded, as there seems little reason to doubt that it is, the more daring and deplorable must the impiety have been, seeing it implied so direct and literal a defiance of that first commandment of the Divine law, "Thou shalt have no other gods *before me*." In setting up the worship "of Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and of Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites" *here*, right over against the temple he had himself built for the God of Israel, he was, so to speak, exalting and honouring these "vanities" of heathenism before the very face of Jehovah.

For these the race of Israel oft forsook
Their living strength, and, unfrequented, left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods: for which their heads as low,
Bow'd down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came Ashtoreth, whom the Phœnicians called
Astarte, Queen of Heaven, with crescent horns,
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king, whose heart though large,
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul.

The road at this point turns northwards, and slants gradually down the western face of Olivet, till it reaches the bottom of the valley. All along this part of the road, both above and below it, the hill side is paved with tombs. The valley of Jehoshaphat is, and has been for ages, the favourite burying-place of the Jews. They believe that this valley is to be the scene of the last judgment—that here all Israel's wrongs are to be avenged—and that to those who are laid in the dust of this valley some priority or privilege shall on that great and notable day be conceded. This fancy they seem to found on the words of the prophet Joel: "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land" (Joel iii. 2). It is but another exemplification of that gross and carnal style of interpretation which grasps at the letter and loses the spirit. Strangely enough, the Moslems entertain notions regarding this valley of a somewhat similar kind. They point to a projecting stone high up in the wall of the Haram inclosure, and overlooking the valley, upon which they say that Mohammed their prophet is to sit on the judgment-day.

The road we have been hitherto pursuing reaches the bottom of the valley of Jehoshaphat, precisely at the point where we had crossed it the evening before. From this same point the path, by which we had then ascended the hill, runs right up the face of Olivet, towards the village and the mosque on its summit. In the angle between the lower end of this path and the Jericho road, lies the traditional Gethsemane. The little piece of ground claiming this sacred name was bought some years ago by the Latin Church, and surrounded with a high wall. There is no reference to it as the scene of our Lord's agony of an earlier date than the fourth century; and the case of the Church of the Ascension, already noticed, is a sufficient proof of the little dependence that can be placed on the traditions of that period. There is another walled inclosure a few

hundred yards farther up the valley, which, with equal confidence, the Armenian Church holds to be the true Gethsemane. As regards the Gethsemane of the Latin Church, it is impossible to admire the monkish taste which has laid it out with the straight walks, and artificial flowerbeds, of a modern European garden.

The Scripture tells us, indeed, that at Gethsemane there "was a garden." But the garden of those days in Judea was rather an orchard than a *parterre* for flowers. The only objects of interest within the wall, and which are fitted to carry the mind back to the times of old, are eight venerable olive trees, evidently of very great antiquity. The position, however, which this piece of ground occupies suggests an objection to its claims as the true Gethsemane which it is difficult to get over. There can be no question that the real Gethsemane must have been a retired place, for it was resorted to by our Lord for a purpose which demanded seclusion. Could that seclusion ever have been found at the junction of two public roads? All the light which Scripture throws on its situation is contained in very few words. John says, "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples." In the corresponding passage of Luke we read—"And he came out (from the city) and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him." It was on the farther side of the Kedron, and upon the Mount of Olives—this is all that Scripture tells regarding it. The traditional locality of the Latin Church comes, it is true, within the limits of this description; but so does that of the Armenian Church, and so does the whole eastern side of the bed of the valley, and the slope of the hill overhanging it for a considerable distance around. The expression—"He went, *as he was wont*, to the Mount of Olives"—would certainly lead one, who had no ready-made theory upon the subject, to suppose that Gethsemane could hardly have been situated within little more than a stone-throw from the city wall, but must have lain at least a short way up the hill, where the quiet

which the Saviour sought was more likely to be found. Such, at least, was the conclusion which had been arrived at by our intelligent guide, and by most of those other friends whose lengthened residence in Jerusalem had afforded them the best means of examining the question. In their view of the subject I entirely concur.

Not, indeed, that the question is of any great moment. Here, at all events, is the dry bed of the brook Kedron, which, on that ever memorable night, He crossed; and *there* is the Mount of Olives to which He went forth. Somewhere, therefore, in this immediate vicinity Gethsemane must have been. In some one or other of those recesses that indent the face of the hill, or that furrow its sides, must lie that very spot of earth on which the Saviour of the world fell prostrate in the hour of his indescribable agony, "when his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

It was the place of all others where one would have wished to be alone. There are some feelings too deep for utterance, and there are some thoughts which the mind can reach and realize only in solitude. If one could have stolen out from the city at the dead of night, when the valley was shrouded in darkness, and when all distracting sounds were hushed in silence—*then* would have been the time, and these the circumstances in which to visit Gethsemane. Seated in one of those sequestered hollows in the hill side, with no other company but that of the sleepless watchers of the sky looking down from their unfathomable depths, as they did eighteen hundred years ago upon that midnight scene where the Man of Sorrows "trode the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him;" in such a place, and at such an hour, might one have hoped to feel as one would wish to do, in the presence of those awful memories which Gethsemane brings up before every Christian mind. Under the exhausting heat of the noon-day sun, and amid the distractions of a public thoroughfare, "the spirit might be willing, but the flesh was weak."

From this point we turned down the valley, still on its eastern

side and keeping a little above the bed of the Kedron, in order to visit the rock-tombs, commonly known as those of Jehoshaphat, Absalom, James the apostle, and Zacharias. Of their real history nothing whatever is known. By some they are considered to be as ancient as the times of the personages whose names they bear; while others regard the very oldest of them as not of higher antiquity than the age of the Herods, and are much disposed to assign to all of them a date two or three centuries later still. They have in their general aspect and architecture a strong resemblance to the rock-tombs and temples of Petra, which are commonly held to belong to the period of the Roman occupation of Judea. In forming the so-called tombs of Absalom and Zacharias, the solid block of which they severally consist has been first isolated from the mass to which it belonged, by cutting away and removing the rock for a considerable space on both sides and behind. The block thus isolated, and left standing as if in front of a gigantic niche, has then been hewn out into the form of a small square temple, fully twenty feet of a side in breadth, and rather more than twenty feet in height. The sides are ornamented with columns and cornices of considerable beauty—the top of the tomb of Zacharias terminating in a solid pyramid, and that of Absalom in a dome running up into a small rounded spire. This upper part of the tomb of Absalom is not like the lower part, hewn out of the solid, but built of separate stones. The entire height of the tomb of Zacharias is about thirty-five feet, and that of Absalom about forty-five. The two other tombs are simply excavations hewn out of the perpendicular face of the rock; that of Jehoshaphat having a rather handsome façade of square pilasters, crowned with a pediment of considerable beauty. Of Jehoshaphat himself, Scripture expressly states, “that he was buried with his fathers in the city of David.” The tradition therefore that connects his name with this tomb, outside of the city altogether, is evidently worthless. With respect to Absalom, on the other hand, there is a statement contained in sacred history which some suppose to

point to the very structure above described. "Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's Place" (2 Sam. xviii. 18). It is hard to believe, however, that the Ionic columns along the sides, and the Doric ornaments upon the architrave of the so-called tomb of Absalom are as old as this theory would make them. The real "pillar" of Absalom, if it stood in this neighbourhood at all, had probably disappeared long before the Christian era, in one or other of those desolating wars that so often raged around Jerusalem, and that levelled so many of its far more durable monuments in the dust. It is, in fact, a moot point among writers upon the subject, whether this was the king's dale at all. Perhaps it is impossible to arrive at absolute certainty upon this latter question; but there are at least some circumstances that strongly favour the claim of the valley of Jehoshaphat to this distinction. Apart from the obvious consideration that it could hardly fail to be in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, the place of his own residence, that Absalom would choose a site for the erection of the pillar that was to perpetuate his name, there is an interesting incident recorded in Scripture history which strongly countenances the idea that this valley of Jehoshaphat was really the king's dale. When Abraham went in pursuit of Chedorlaomer and the other kings of the East who had spoiled Sodom and Gomorrah, and carried off his kinsman Lot, the patriarch overtook them at Dan, and chased them to near Damascus, and achieved a signal victory. In returning from this great exploit to his own dwelling-place at Mamre, near to Hebron, it is natural to suppose that he came southward by the way of Shechem and Bethel—the course he had followed before on first coming into the land, and which is the common route to this day. Following this course, he must of necessity have passed close to Salem, as Jerusalem was then called. Now, the sacred history relates that while thus

journeying southwards to Mamre, "the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale." For this purpose the king of Sodom must have come up from the deep valley of the Jordan where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, and across the hill country, so as to fall into the line of Abraham's march; and certain it is, that more than one of the main routes from that part of the country would conduct him to this very point in the valley of Jehoshaphat. But further still, the sacred history goes on to say, speaking of the occasion, and the place of this meeting between Abraham and the grateful king of Sodom, "And Melchizedec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. xiv. 17, 18). In this narrative it is not said of Melchizedec, as it is said of the king of Sodom, that "he went out"—that he took a journey "to meet Abraham." It is said simply, that "he brought forth bread and wine." The expression implies that he was at the place of meeting already; it implies that this king's dale, where the interview took place, was, so to speak, at Melchizedec's own door. He had heard of what was going on beneath the walls of his royal residence; and desiring and delighting to do honour to one who like himself was a servant and worshipper of the true God, he came forth to greet the patriarch and to give him his blessing. If these considerations do anything towards proving the valley of Jehoshaphat and the king's dale to be one and the same, to that extent they support the conclusion, that somewhere in this vicinity Absalom's pillar must have stood. And though the present structure may not be the original one, it may have been designed to supply its predecessor's place. Josephus expressly says—"Now Absalom had erected for himself a stone marble pillar in the king's dale, two furlongs distant from Jerusalem."*

* *Antiquities*, book vii. chap. x. 3.

the pillar at the distance of a quarter of a mile from Jerusalem, while it strongly confirms the view now given of the identity of the valley of Jehoshaphat with the king's dale, at the same time entirely accords with the supposition that the present monument is not the original one. Certain it is, however, that the Jews to this day associate the existing monument with Absalom's name and memory; for when they take their children to see it, they encourage them to cast stones at it, in token of their abhorrence of his unfilial conduct in rebelling against David his father.

One would hardly think the argument worth stating, indeed, for the mere purpose of establishing any conclusion whatever about David's profligate and unnatural son. "The memory of the wicked shall rot." If Absalom's memory have not perished, it deserves to do so. But one would gladly learn all that can be known regarding the scene of so remarkable an interview as that of the father of the faithful with the king of righteousness and king of peace—a man who stands out on the page of Scripture as one of the most remarkable and illustrious of those typical personages who foreshadowed the great Messiah.

Descending from these rock-tombs to the bottom of the valley, we proceeded down the course of the Kedron towards the Pool of the Virgin. The valley here narrows into a deep defile, separating the tall rocks that tower up in rugged grandeur on either hand. Perched on the very brow of the precipice that overhangs the left or eastern side of this gorge, is the village of Selwân or Siloam. It consists partly of ancient tombs hewn out of the solid rock, and partly of square stone-buildings, so closely resembling the rock on which they stand, as to be hardly distinguishable from it. Its inhabitants are a rude and rather lawless race, dwelling alone in their lofty and somewhat inaccessible eyrie, from which, like the vulture or the eagle stooping upon his quarry, they are said sometimes to rush down upon the luckless traveller who may chance to be belated in the valley beneath. The opposite height, which forms the right or western side of the defile, is Ophel, a continuation of the rocky ridge

which, farther up, forms Moriah. The Pool of the Virgin lies at the base of Ophel, the village of Selwân looking right down upon it from the confronting cliff. The natives call it *Ain-um-ed-Deraj*—the fountain of the mother of steps—a designation probably derived from the simple circumstance that it is necessary to descend a considerable flight of steps to reach its waters. What may have been its Scripture name, or whether it be alluded to in Scripture at all, are questions as to which there exists a great diversity of opinion. The tradition which connects it with the Virgin Mary, appears to be nothing better than a worthless monkiah legend. Very great interest attaches to this pool notwithstanding, and that chiefly for two reasons—the one, that its waters experience, sometimes oftener than once a day, a sudden rise and fall; and the other, that it has been found to communicate by a regular tunnel cut through the solid rock, and of nearly 600 yards in length, with the Pool of Siloam on the western side of Ophel.

The phenomenon of the sudden flowing and ebbing of the waters in this pool, however caused, is evidently of immemorial occurrence. It is noticed by Chrysostom in the fourth century, and by many subsequent writers. By more modern travellers it had been generally lost sight of, till attention was recalled to it by Dr. Robinson, who was fortunate enough to witness the phenomenon himself. Along with certain others of his party, he had descended the twenty steps which lead down from the pathway above to the cavity in the rock which the pool occupies, and was in the act of examining it when the rise of the waters took place. They seemed to bubble up from beneath the steps, and in a few minutes rose about a foot, and then as rapidly they sunk back to their usual level. From inquiries made on the spot, he subsequently learned that this happens sometimes twice or thrice in a day, except in summer, when it seldom occurs oftener than once in two or three days.

The question is, What causes this singular occurrence? A tradition universally credited exists, to the effect that there is a

communication either by an artificial conduit, or through natural fissures in the rock, between the ancient temple cisterns on the summit of Moriah and this Pool of the Virgin below. In itself this is highly probable. The tanks or cisterns of the temple, so indispensable for the numerous cleansings of the ancient temple service, appear to have been fed both from the upper pool of Gihon on the south-western side of the city, and also by the famous aqueduct of Solomon, brought in from the magnificent reservoirs still existing about two or three miles beyond Bethlehem. It seems quite certain, moreover, that there is, and always has been, a spring in the temple vaults—a perennial fountain within the ancient holy place, the emblem of the grace of Him who stood in the midst of the temple and cried, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” There is no external or visible outlet for the overflow of those waters. It is obvious that both for this purpose and for the ordinary sewerage of the temple, some outlet must have been provided. By means of some such outlet, it most probably is, that the water finds its way from the temple courts above to the Pool of the Virgin in the valley beneath. But the singular phenomenon of the sudden and frequent rising and falling of these waters in the pool remains a mystery. In talking quite recently upon this subject with an eminent mining engineer, I have ascertained that precisely the same phenomenon has been often observed within the last twelvemonth in the shaft of a coal-pit in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. Water conveyed by some subterranean feeder found its way into the pit, and having flooded the working-galleries, rose to the height of ninety feet in the shaft. This state of things still continues, the engine employed to remove the water not being powerful enough for the purpose; and meanwhile those in charge of the pit have frequently noticed the water in the shaft rising suddenly some feet higher than its ordinary level, and then as suddenly sinking down to that level again. Here, then, is a case exactly similar to that of the Virgin’s Pool. The engineer who informed me of this

fact, has not conclusively made up his own mind as to the cause of it. But his present impression is, that it is to be explained by sudden eruptions of gas issuing from beneath into the water through what are technically called blowers, thereby causing the water to rise and swell up in the shaft, and then leaving it to return to its natural level when the gas has passed through it and escaped into the atmosphere above. Whether this theory be sufficient to solve the problem of the rising and falling of the waters in the Virgin's Pool, I shall not venture at present to say; but at least it suggests an important line of inquiry which may yet be pursued to some certain and positive result.

As regards the actual course of the waters from the temple courts to the pool in question, the point probably will never be settled till a thorough and scientific investigation take place of the sewerage system of the ancient city, and of the means and arrangements for supplying it with water. Hitherto the jealousy of the local authorities and the fanaticism of the Moslem population have made this impossible. It is surely to be hoped, however, that the increasing liberality of the Turkish government, and the great and growing interest which is taken by Christian nations in everything that relates to the Holy Land, will ere long lead to the removal of the hindrances which hitherto have stood in the way of any thorough and complete investigation of the many difficult questions connected with the antiquities and topography of Jerusalem that still remain to be solved.

Meanwhile, among the intelligent and adventurous pioneers who, in spite of all existing obstacles and discouragements, have been pushing forward their inquiries and extending the limits of our knowledge on these subjects, no one individual occupies a more distinguished place than the learned and indefatigable Dr. Robinson. It was he who first, in modern times, demonstrated the connection between the Pool of the Virgin and that of Siloam, by the very laborious and somewhat perilous expedient of making his way on hands and knees—in some places crawling on his belly—through the long, low, narrow and winding

passage from the one to the other. This tunnel must evidently have been executed by men, or in an age, of meagre scientific acquirements. They seem neither to have understood how to take accurate levels, nor how to keep to the right course. The tunnel, as carefully measured by Dr. Robinson, proved to be 1750 feet in length, though the actual distance between the pools is only 1200 feet. In the course of the tunnel there are many false cuts, which it is plain the workmen had subsequently abandoned on discovering that they were off the right line. But the greatest puzzle of all connected with this tunnel is to find out a reason for making it. The ridge of Ophel, through which it is carried, drops down in a precipice to the level of the valley, at the distance of only a few hundred yards from the point where the tunnel begins; and the water, one would suppose, might have been conducted to the intended terminus far more easily in a trench or conduit round the base of the hill.

Dr. Robinson's own theory upon the subject is, that the tunnel must have been made in order to render the water accessible on both sides of Ophel when the city might happen to be besieged. This theory, of course, implies that the city wall did actually inclose and protect both ends of the tunnel, as otherwise the object in question would not have been secured. There is, however, no evidence extant to prove that this was the case. Speaking, indeed, of the old wall, Josephus says, that "it went southward, having its bending above the fountain of Siloam, where it also bends again towards the east at Solomon's Pool;" or rather, as the passage might more accurately be translated, "it went southward, having its bending above the fountain of Siloam, *from whence* it inclines away eastwards to Solomon's Pool"—*καὶ ἐπεὶ πρὸς νοτὸν ὑπὲρ τὴν Σιλωὰμ ἐπιστρέφον πηγὴν, ἐνθεν τε πάλιν ἐκκλινον πρὸς ἀνατολὴν ἐπὶ τὴν Σολομῶνος Κολυμβήθραν*.^{*} But this description seems to intimate that the wall ran along the height that overhangs Siloam, rather than that it passed outside of the pool so as to inclose it. If

^{*} Wars, book v. chap. iv. 2.

the Solomon's Pool of which it speaks be the same which is now called the Pool of the Virgin, the inference would appear to be that the wall crossed the ridge of Ophel from the height above the one pool to the height above the other; and, if so, it may have come so near in both cases as, by some outwork, to protect the waters. The reference our Lord makes, incidentally, to the fall of "the tower of Siloam" lends at least some countenance to the idea, that there was a defensive outwork of the kind now alluded to adjacent to that pool. At the northern base of the castle rock of Edinburgh, the ruin still stands of what was called the well-house tower. If from the well which that tower defended, a tunnel had been cut through the rock so as to establish a communication with some other fountain, occupying a slightly higher level on the Grassmarket side of the Castle Hill, the relative position of these two wells or fountains would somewhat resemble that of the pools of Siloam and the Virgin. It is quite a conceivable and even a natural supposition that the kings of Jerusalem may have thought it an object sufficient to justify the cost and labour of making the tunnel, to secure this double access to the waters. At the same time, the security could never have been very complete; as the pools, after all, seem to have been, to all practical intents and purposes, outside of the city wall. There is a passage in Josephus which makes this plain. In an address which he made to the Jews during the great siege, he took occasion, in order to convince them that God was fighting against them, to say: "As for Titus (the Roman general), these springs, that were formerly almost dried up when they were under your power, since he has come, run more plentifully than they did before; accordingly, you know, that Siloam, as well as the other springs that were without the city, did so far fail that water was sold by distinct measures: whereas, they now have such a quantity of water for your enemies, as is sufficient, not only for drink both for themselves and their cattle, but for watering their gardens also."*

* *Wars*, book v. chap. ix. 4.

passage must have been overlooked by Dr. Robinson when, in supporting his view of the design of the tunnel for conveying the waters of the Virgin's Pool to that of Siloam, he says:—"That the ancient wall probably ran along the valley of Jehoshaphat, or at least descended into it, and included both Siloam and this upper fountain."* The wall evidently did not include Siloam, and apparently it did not include the Pool of the Virgin either. The fountains, according to Josephus, were both "without the city"—that is, without the walls—and so imperfectly secured as to have fallen, almost from the very first, into the power of the besieging army. It must be confessed, therefore, that the true theory of the tunnel is a question still involved in perplexity, and which we have not at present any sufficient materials to determine.

Leaving the Pool of the Virgin, we continued our course down the valley of Jehoshaphat to the southern extremity of Ophel, and passing round the steep rock face in which it terminates, we came on the farther side of it, to the other pool to which the tunnel conducts the waters we had just been visiting. That this second pool is really the Pool of Siloam spoken of in Scripture, there cannot be any reasonable doubt. The terms in which Josephus describes its position are so precise as to make this certain: "Now, the valley of the cheesemongers" (the Tyropæon), he says, ". . . extended as far as Siloam, for that is the name of a fountain which hath sweet water in it, and this in great plenty also."† In other words he places Siloam at the mouth or lower end of the Tyropæon, exactly where the Siloam of the present day is found.

The tunnel which conducts the waters of the Pool of the Virgin to this point, terminates in a small basin about six feet broad, excavated in the solid rock, and the mouth of which is built up. We entered it, through a hole in the wall, and descended to the water by the broken steps of an ancient stair. The waters find their way through an aperture in the lower

* Vol. iii. page 340.

† *Wars*, book v. chap. iv. 1.

part of the wall into a large adjacent basin outside, and which is the Pool of Siloam properly so called. It is a large reservoir, well and solidly built, fully fifty feet long, about twenty broad, and as many deep. There are handsome columns built into the sides of the reservoir, and it has traces about it of a somewhat elaborate ornamentation. From this capacious and elegant reservoir there can be little doubt the king's gardens, which occupied the bed of the valley below it, were anciently watered. Dilapidated and neglected as it now is, like everything else about the modern city, we saw its waters serving the same purpose still. Passing in a gentle stream through the all but empty reservoir, they were led in a main channel along the base of the rock, and every here and there led off, in little streamlets, into the adjacent vegetable gardens which they are employed to irrigate, and which they clothe with unfailing verdure and fruitfulness during even the drought of summer.

It is here that the valley of Hinnom, coming down a narrow gorge from the west, crosses the mouth of the Tyropœon valley and Siloam, and about a hundred yards farther on falls into the valley of Jehoshaphat, or of the Lower Kedron, as it is here more properly called. The whole of the basin formed by the confluence of these three valleys is occupied by the present gardens of Siloam. The soil, washed down from the surrounding hills in the course of ages into this hollow, is deep—the heat reflected from the yellow limestone rocks that encompass it is intense. It needed only, therefore, such an unfailing supply of water as the Pool of Siloam yields, to secure an exuberant vegetation; and it is, accordingly, from this fertile spot that the people of Jerusalem are chiefly supplied with garden vegetables at the present day. The place, in fact, is a natural hot-bed, placed in the midst of most romantic scenery; and when occupied of old as the king's gardens, and laid out with all the taste and beauty of which the fountain still bears such unequivocal marks, it must have been a singularly attractive scene.

Standing in the centre of the gardens, the view on every side

is picturesque and striking in the highest degree. Looking towards the north or northwest there is, on the right, the Hill of Offence towering above, and coming down by a sheer wall of rock into the bed of the valley. The steep precipice in which Ophel ends is immediately in front; and between it and the descending rock face of the Hill of Offence, already described, is the narrow defile that forms the lower end of the valley of Jehoshaphat. Through this defile the valley itself is seen, stretching away onwards and upwards in long vista, to the point where a bend of the Mount of Olives shuts up the view. To the left of the bluff in which Ophel terminates, the valley, or ravine, of the Tyropæon slopes rapidly away up into the heart of the city, between Moriah and Zion; its upper part overhung on the right by the mosque of El-Aksa, at the western extremity of Moriah, and on the left by the still loftier heights of the ancient citadel of King David. Beyond the mouth of the Tyropæon, and still more to the left, the narrow and gloomy entrance of the valley of Hinnom opens—a deep cleft between the summits of Zion, and the equally bold and lofty confronting Hill of Evil Counsel.

And now, turning round and looking towards the south, down the course of the descending valley of the Lower Kedron, the sight that meets the eye is hardly less remarkable. It is a deep gulf, floored with gardens, and abounding in fruit trees, and walled in on either hand by steep hills, ribbed by the horizontal strata of the limestone rock, and presenting an endless succession of terrace-like shelves, rising above one another; the valley itself winding away between these hills, till it finally disappears among the wild and rugged cliffs, which mark its entrance into the wilderness of Judah. It is when standing in this valley, and looking up to the heights of Moriah and Zion, several hundred feet above it, that one gets something like an adequate idea and impression of the real grandeur of the site of the Holy City. Apart from all the associations of its sacred and glorious history, it is in itself, as seen from this point, a city that could not fail to excite admiration in even the dullest mind.

The Pool of Siloam, however, has other sources of interest besides those which are connected with the character of the surrounding scenery, and with the fertility which it spreads around it. There are associations belonging to it of a far higher and more sacred kind. "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," said Jesus to the blind man whose eyes he had anointed with the clay. It was immediately after coming out from the temple, probably by the southern gate, this memorable incident occurred. The blind man had not far to go. Down that slope of the valley of the Tyropœon he groped his way to the pool, and "washed, and came seeing." It is in connection with this occurrence that the evangelist takes occasion to remind us that "Siloam is by interpretation *Sent*;" pointing, thereby, significantly to Christ, the author of the miracle, who is emphatically the "Sent" of God. To Him alone it belongs "to open the blind eyes." In the waters of this pool, therefore, we have before us a recognized emblem of Him who is both the *light* and the *life* of men. It is by keeping this fact in view that we discover the point and force of the accusation brought against ancient Israel that "they refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly." The arm of Jehovah was unseen. Its movements were noiseless. It made no display. A gross-minded people made no account of it, and preferred a support more palpable to sense. They "rejoiced in Rezin and Remaliah's son" (Isa. viii. 6); and this foreign power—this arm of flesh, on which they chose to lean—proved their destruction.

In the well-known passage of Isaiah, in which these things are spoken of, the waters of Shiloah, there employed to typify the *true* Saviour of Israel, are described as going "softly." The Hebrew word is "secretly" (שִׁטְרָה). It conveys the idea of what is covered up and hidden. It is the same word which is used regarding David when describing his grief on hearing of the death of Absalom his son—"the king *covered* his face" (2 Sam. xix. 4). The expression, so understood, throws a flood of deeply interesting light on this Pool of Siloam. Its waters steal along

underground. Their source no doubt is in Moriah ; they proceed from the site of the ancient sanctuary, and they have a long course to run before they come forth into the light of day. And when they do, it is without tumult or noise. They form no brawling torrent or angry flood, sweeping away the very soil from the face of the ground, and carrying havoc and ruin before it. They come forth, on the contrary, in a placid and gentle stream—a stream that never fails—a stream that quickens whatever it touches into life, and that makes its presence known only by the beauty and fertility which it spreads around its course.

Such is the *literal* Siloam. And how like in all this is it to the "Sent" of God! He was sent from above; but for long ages the promise of his coming, hid in the bosom of the church, ran like a stream underground. At length in the fulness of the time, the Sent One, the Divine Messenger, appeared. He came not with observation. Far down in the lowly vale of a deep obscurity, He stole out, all but unnoticed, into view as a little child, and went on his peaceful way "doing good;" and wherever He came the desert was changed into a fruitful field.

It is a fact full of significance, in connection with this symbolic method of representing a great spiritual truth, that the valley into which the waters of Siloam issue forth, runs right down through the desolate wilderness of Judah to the Dead Sea. Looking up from the Pool of Siloam, to the site of the ancient temple on the height above, and then turning round and looking down the valley below, and seeing how the waters of the pool are clothing it with life and fruitfulness, as they sink softly into its otherwise arid soil, it is impossible not to be persuaded that *here* we have the very imagery before us, which a divine inspiration taught Ezekiel to employ in these remarkable words—"Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house (of God); and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the fore-front of the house stood toward the east, and the waters *came down* from under, from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. . . .

Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. . . . And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed" (Ezek. xlvii. 1, 8, 12). In a word, in—

—— Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God,

—descending from the sanctuary above, and coming forth to fertilize and beautify the valley below—it needs no flight of fancy to recognize the appropriate and most attractive emblem of the gospel of Christ sent down from heaven to purify and bless a polluted and perishing world!

Before leaving this deeply interesting locality, we visited the spot, about a hundred yards below the Pool of Siloam, where Isaiah is said to have been sawn asunder. It is marked by a very ancient sycamore tree, which it is evident that great care is taken to preserve. From this point we went on a few hundred yards farther down the valley to En-rogel—"the well of the spies," as tradition holds it to be. The natives call it Bir-Eyub, which some suppose to mean "the well of Job;" others "the well of Joab;" and others still, "the well of Eyub," the father of the famous Sultan, Sala-ed-din. The more interesting question is whether the well itself be really the En-rogel of Scripture. This name first occurs in the book of Joshua (xv. 7), in the description there given of the northern border of the territory of the tribe of Judah. The sacred historian, after tracing the line onwards from the northern shores of the Dead Sea, and that by a route which must have conducted it to this immediate neighbourhood, goes on to say—"and the goings out thereof were at En-rogel: and the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom, unto the south side of the Jebusites; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the mountain

that lieth before the valley of giants, that is the valley of Rephaim, westward," &c. Now, the well in question occupies a position in the valley of the Lower Kedron, up which this march line runs, and quite near to the mouth of the lateral valley of Hinnom.

Had the territory of Judah been meant to include Jerusalem, the border must have run on in a continuous line northwards, and right up the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there would, in that case, have been no need to mention En-rogel at all. But designed, as the border was, to leave out Jerusalem, "it went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom, and the south side of the Jebusites." In other words, the march line was here to make a turn or bend that required to be specially noted; and the En-rogel of the present day occupies a place that exactly meets the conditions of the narrative.

There are two other passages in which En-rogel is named. In 2 Sam. xvii. 17 it is stated, that "Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel," when, as spies from David's company, they were lying in wait for tidings from his friends in the adjacent city. And again in 1 Kings i. 8, where we are told, in the account there given of Adonijah's conspiracy to obtain the crown, that "he slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel." It was while this treasonable feast was going on, that suddenly the blare of trumpets and the shouting of a mighty multitude came echoing down through the valley of Hinnom, conveying to the conspirators the unwelcome and startling news, that not half a mile from where they were carousing, Solomon had just been crowned as king of Israel. Like one of our modern shells thrown into the midst of a hostile camp, the fact so unexpectedly announced scattered Adonijah's associates to the four winds; while he himself rushed up the valley of the Tyropæon to the temple, to take refuge beneath the horns of the altar.

These memorable incidents of Scripture history serve at least to enhance the charm which belongs to this remarkable locality, if they be not also sufficient to prove that the Bir-Eyub and

the En-rogel of the Bible are one and the same. The only other admissible supposition, indeed, would seem to be that En-rogel was another name for Siloam ; and this is the view which some actually hold. The objection to this theory is, that while Scripture makes use of both names, it gives no hint of their being applicable to one and the same thing. It is true that in speaking of Adonijah's feast, Josephus describes it as taking place in the king's gardens ; and these we know lay a little farther up the valley than the Bir-Eyub and nearer to Siloam. But this proves nothing to the point. The Scripture narrative does not say that the *feast* was held at En-rogel, but only that the sheep and oxen and fat cattle on which they feasted were *slain* "by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel." This statement is of course perfectly compatible with that of Josephus, that the feast itself took place in the king's gardens a distance at the most from En-rogel of only two or three hundred yards.

Upon the whole, therefore, the evidence appears all but conclusive that Bir-Eyub is the true En-rogel, where the preparations were made for Adonijah's treasonable feast ; where Jonathan and Ahimaaz were discovered and all but taken while waiting to learn through Hushai, the Archite, what Absalom and Ahithophel were plotting against David in the neighbouring city ; and where the northern boundary of Judah turned westwards out of the valley of the Kedron. The well is no less than 125 feet in depth, well and solidly built ; and even in summer has seldom less in it than fifty feet of water. In winter, or early spring, when the rains have been heavy and long continued, it is said sometimes to fill to the brim, and even to overflow—an event which the inhabitants never fail to celebrate with demonstrations of joy.

From En-rogel we followed the ancient boundary line of Judah, and turning westwards entered the valley of Hinnom. As already explained, it is not so much a valley as rather a deep and narrow ravine—a cleft in the rock dividing the Hill of Evil Counsel from that of Mount Zion. The associations of the fertile

hollow beneath, into which it opens, and where we had found so much to interest us, were all of the most pleasing kind. Those of Hinnom, on the contrary, like the place itself, are gloomy and repulsive. At the very mouth of the valley, and overhanging, on the left hand, the entrance into it, is the memorable "Potter's Field," bought with the reward of iniquity—with the paltry bribe for which Judas betrayed our Lord. It is full of tombs hewn out of the rock, but in which nothing of any historic interest has yet been found. The tombs themselves are rude and untasteful; and down even to comparatively modern times, they seem to have been chiefly used "to bury strangers in"—a somewhat singular coincidence with the original destination of the ground.

As if this "field of blood" were not enough to cast a shade of horror over this place, the very name of the valley reminds us, as we slowly ascend the narrow and rugged path that winds up through it, that it was the frequent and familiar scene of iniquities and atrocities that have made it, in Scripture language, the synonyme of hell. It was here that in the days of Ahaz and of Manasseh, even royal children were immolated as offerings to Moloch—

——— Horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice and parents' tears:
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud
Their children's cries unheard, that pass through fire
To his grim idol.

What a picture of human depravity! On that height above, the one living and true God—a God of infinite goodness and purity—had put His name. Of that height, the hill of Zion, He had said, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell for I have desired it." And yet beneath the shadow of the very mount of God, did a people whom he had loaded with His benefits, set up the most hideous forms of idolatry that ever defiled and degraded this fallen world.

About a fourth of a mile upwards from the lower end of Hinnom, the hitherto narrow ravine opens out a little, and

assumes a more pleasing character. From this point upwards it is commonly called the valley of Gihon. Here it bends away to the right, and sweeps round the south-western face of the hill of Zion. Near the point where this bend begins, lies the Birket-es-Sultan, usually regarded as the "lower pool" of Isaiah (xxii. 9). It is a large reservoir, occupying the entire bed of the valley, and shut in at both ends by strong and well-built walls. It is about 600 feet in length, 250 feet in breadth, and 40 feet in depth. The wall at the lower end of the pool is of great thickness, and along the top of it a roadway runs across the valley. Immediately beyond the upper end of this huge reservoir the valley is traversed by the aqueduct that leads the water from the pools of Solomon, situated several miles south from Bethlehem, into the inclosures of the ancient temple upon Moriah. The course of this aqueduct we had afterwards an opportunity of tracing from the magnificent reservoirs where it begins, onwards to the point at which it disappears beneath the wall behind the Haram. Meanwhile we held on our way, contenting ourselves with a general survey of many things which we designed on some future day more closely and carefully to examine.

At the point we had now reached, though we had been ascending constantly and often rapidly all the way from En-rogel, the bed of the valley is still about 100 feet below the level of the city wall—a fact that may suffice to indicate how commanding a position was occupied by "the citadel of King David," which crowned of old the heights of Zion. A short way beyond the "lower pool" already described, the valley takes another turn, running off from the city in a westerly direction for nearly a mile. At the point where this last turn takes place, the valley is close under the south-western angle of the city wall. In this uppermost reach of the valley, and not far from the head of it, is the Birket-el-Mammilla, another extensive reservoir, and which, there seems little reason to doubt, is the "upper pool" of Old Testament history. It is considerably less than the other, being only 300 feet in length, 200 in breadth, and 18 in depth.

It appears to be to this reservoir that Scripture refers when it speaks of King Hezekiah as having "stopped the upper water course of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David;"—instead, that is, of allowing the overflow of the upper pool to follow its natural course down the valley we have been describing—that is the valley of Gihon—to the lower pool, he turned it aside, and led it by a conduit into the city. In point of fact, there is at the present day a large tank or reservoir within the city wall, on the west side of Zion, near the Tower of Hippicus, and whose position answers so exactly to the Scripture statement just quoted, that it is commonly called the Pool of Hezekiah.

These great works abundantly prove how much pains had been employed in ancient times to secure for the city an adequate supply of water. Nor were these works the only ones provided for this purpose. Besides the larger tanks in the temple courts, almost every house of any note had its own private cistern—a large cavity, usually in the court or sunk storey of the house, hewn out of the solid rock, and filled during the rainy season with the water led into it from the flat roofs of the buildings around. Multitudes of these cisterns remain to the present time; and so abundant was the supply thus obtained, that with scarcely any natural fountains or wells, Jerusalem seems hardly ever to have suffered, even in its longest and most terrible sieges, from the want of water.

Leaving the valley at the point where it approaches nearest to the city wall, that is, a little way beyond the upper end of the lower pool, we rode up the steep slanting path that leads towards the Jaffa gate. We had thus followed the course of the deep valleys which all but encircle Jerusalem, from the garden of Gethsemane beneath the centre of the eastern wall, round to the south-western extremity of the city. We were now to return to the east side again, but instead of going back as we came, by the valleys below, we were to ride along the heights above. Passing therefore, without entering the Jaffa gate, we skirted

the outside of the city wall, which, instead of including the entire hill of Zion, as it did in ancient times, runs across it at the distance of nearly a quarter of a mile from the south end of the hill. Upon this comparatively level space, between the present wall and the brow of the steep descent into the valley of Hinnom, stands the Armenian convent, said, according to one of two conflicting traditions, to occupy the site of the house of Caiaphas, to which our Lord was taken, and where he was examined before being handed over to Pilate. Near this convent is the mosque of the tomb of David, built, according to tradition, on the site of David's sepulchre. These buildings are nearly opposite the present Zion gate, which forms the southern entrance into the city.

The Hill of Zion, at this its highest point, is 300 feet above the Pool of Siloam, and the view from this elevation is exceedingly fine, especially towards the south-east. In that direction the valley of the lower Kedron is seen winding away down into the wilderness of Judah, while the deep hollow which it forms is bridged across in the distance by the lofty and rugged wall of the mountains of Moab. A great part of Zion, as already explained, is outside of the present city wall, and is occupied with gardens and corn-fields. From the summit of the hill, the path we were following led us down into the hollow which divides Zion from the lesser and lower height of Ophel—the continuation of Moriah. This hollow is the Tyropœon valley, which slopes rapidly up from its lower extremity at the Pool of Siloam to the point where we crossed it. A short way above this it passes into the city, between Zion and Moriah, and disappears behind the city wall, which here runs over from the one hill to the other. The valley, downwards, is spotted all over with olive trees. We were now opposite the southern wall of Moriah, which runs right across Ophel till it reaches the brink of the valley of Jehoshaphat, where it turns sharp round to the north. At this angle of the wall our attention was arrested by the immense stones of which the lower part of it is formed. They are many of them from twenty to thirty feet in length, and of corres-

closes to our view upon Mount Moriah is that memorable scene in which king David, humbled under a sense of his sin in vain-gloriously numbering the people, is seen hastening to the spot where Divine mercy had thus interposed in behalf of his people and himself—buying it from Ornan, and erecting on it an altar to the one living and true God.

Twenty or thirty years thereafter, the curtain rises again, and how changed is Moriah now. The rugged hill-top has been levelled and enlarged—it is walled in on every side—a magnificent temple covers the former threshing-floor—the spacious courts around are thronged with a mighty multitude. Princes are there, and priests; and in the midst of them is Solomon, the king. Victims bleed and altars blaze; in solemn procession the ark of the covenant of the Lord, framed 400 years before at the foot of Sinai, is carried into the most Holy place—the innermost shrine of that stately sanctuary. Clad in white robes, 120 priests are standing at the eastern gate of the temple, in that very inclosure on which we are now looking down. The Levites, too, are there with their cymbals, and psalteries, and harps. And as the master of the song gives the word, and the storm of music bursts, and Olivet on the one hand, and Zion on the other, ring and re-echo with the joyful sound issuing from ten thousand tongues—"Praise the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever"—suddenly the glory of the Lord fills the house of the Lord.

A thousand years pass away and the curtain rises once more, and Moriah is still crowned, as in Solomon's days, with the temple of God. It had seen, indeed, within that period many vicissitudes, and for one long interval it had lain in ruins. But it has recently recovered much, if not all, of its original splendour. Herod, the king, has lavished on it all the resources of ample wealth, and cultivated taste, and regal power; and though its spiritual glory has long been on the decline, its courts are as crowded as before—its sacrifices are still slain, and its altars still burn—and now there is one greater than Solomon on His way

to visit it. Already the rejoicing multitude that attend Him are rounding the shoulder of the Mount of Olives, and their hosannahs to the Son of David are rolling like the sound of distant thunder, across the deep valley of Jehoshaphat, to tell that her King is coming unto Zion. There, right over against us in that wall that overhangs the valley, and in the midst of those noble columns that still mark the spot, stood the Golden gate by which, on that solemn occasion, the Son of God entered to claim and to assert His authority over his Father's house—a house designed for prayer, but which ungodly men were turning into a den of thieves.

One other view of Mount Moriah, connected with these times of its ancient history, has yet to come up before us. The men among whom Christ appeared could not abide the day of His coming. They would not have "this man to reign over them." They rejected the Holy One and the just, and consummated their impiety by consigning Him to an ignominious death; and thereby drew down upon their temple, their city, and themselves, the tremendous retribution that rests upon their nation, even until now. What a sight did Moriah exhibit when that day of retribution came! The temple wrapt in flames—its courts flowing ankle-deep with human blood—the victorious legionaries of Rome planting their idolatrous standards, "the abomination that maketh desolate," within the precincts of that once holy ground; while over all this Mount Moriah, inscribed in characters which, to this hour, he who runs may read, was written, as if with the avenging finger of the Almighty—"Ichabod, Ichabod, the glory is departed."

From that memorable day Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles. It is now nearly 1200 years since the followers of the false prophet reared that stupendous mosque on the site of the temple of the true God. And all the while, with the brief exception of less than a century, during which the Crusaders ruled in the city, the religion of Mohammed has been dominant upon Mount Moriah.

Fain would we have descended into the inclosure on which we had thus been looking down. Fain would we have trod these once sacred courts. Fain would we have entered that jealously-guarded mosque, and have seen, railed in beneath the mighty dome, the native unhewn rock still projecting upwards from the floor, rough and rugged as it was when it overshadowed, 3000 years ago, the Jebusite's threshing floor. But it could not be. There were now no stairs, as in the days of Paul, leading down from the castle into the temple area; and even had there been, we durst not have descended them. The old and somewhat liberal-minded pasha, who of late years had more than once granted permission to travellers to visit the great mosque, had been recently removed from his post, and his successor had not arrived. There was therefore, at that moment, no official in Jerusalem, as the British consul subsequently told us, competent to issue an order for our admission, even had he been willing to do so.

At length, slowly and reluctantly, we left this intensely interesting spot, and again threading our way through the labyrinth of crooked passages, empty rooms, and imperfectly lighted stairs, we regained the street, remounted our horses, and rode on towards the house in which we had been recommended to take up our abode during our stay in Jerusalem. To reach it we returned to the street that leads from St. Stephen's gate right across the city, in a westerly direction, towards the Damascus gate. About 200 yards from this latter gate we turned to the left, up a narrow, dirty lane, such as in this country we might stumble on in the back settlements of some broken-down country village of last century, where paviers, and police regulations, and sanitary commissioners were entirely unknown. About half-way up this wretched lane, into which scarce one solitary window opened, we came to a rude outside stair, at the top of which was a clumsy door in a blind wall. This, we were told, was the entrance into Max's private hotel. Externally, it had a most unpromising look, and yet we found it to contain, at least

for Syria, a very reasonable amount of comfort within. The door, instead of standing invitingly open, was carefully bolted. Passing through it, we found ourselves upon a sort of corridor, paved with coarse flagstones, and looking down upon a lower court that occupied the centre of the building. A stair from the corridor descended into this lower court, the apartments around which were those occupied by the family of the owner of the hotel, and by the servants. The better apartments, appropriated to travellers, opened into the corridor above. These apartments consisted of four or five bed-rooms, and one good-sized public room, the floor of the inner part of which was raised about a foot higher than the floor of that part which was next the door. This lower end of the apartment formed the dining-room, while the inner, higher, and larger end formed the drawing-room, and was furnished accordingly. It had a vaulted stone roof, and was therefore, even in a very hot day, wonderfully cool.

The owner of the house, Mr. Max, a very respectable person, is a Hungarian, who devotes himself to his shop and his trade, as a tailor and clothier, near the Jaffa gate. The management of the hotel is left altogether in the hands of his wife, who is a German, and who proved to be a most kind, obliging, and intelligent woman, familiar with the English language, and a member of the English Protestant church.

It is not easy for travellers in this country to understand the delight with which we found ourselves surrounded once more with something like the cleanliness and the comforts of our own western world. Plain and unpretending as were the accommodations of Max's hotel, they appeared luxurious and magnificent in contrast with our up-putting of the previous night upon the Mount of Olives. From the open corridor a ladder and some corbel-steps enabled us at all times to mount to the flat roof of the house. Nor could anything be more enjoyable than to sit there, after the heat of the day was gone, when the long shadows were falling from the tall and slender minarets of the surrounding mosques, from the lofty campaniles of the Church of the

Holy Sepulchre, and from the massive dome of the Kubbet-es-Sukkah; when the heights of Olivet, towering up in front of us, were glowing with the golden rays of the setting sun, and the far off but majestic mountains of Moab, robed in the purple glories of evening, were fading away into the coming night. It was, if possible, a greater luxury still, to sit there when night had already fallen, and when the rising moon had begun to peer over the dark shoulder of Olivet, and to ruminate on the impressive scene that lay around us. The countless little tomb-like domes upon the house-tops, rising above the darkness, and touched by the moon's pale light, gave to the city, at such a moment, the aspect of a vast Oriental churchyard, a city of the dead. And dead it truly is, as to all that once made it so unspeakably grand and glorious as the city of David—the place of the tabernacles of the Most High. How unmeet is it now to be the emblem of that other city, infinitely grander and more glorious still, of which an ancient and unknown minstrel so sweetly sung; as that city which—

No candle needs, no moon to shine,
No glistening stars to light;
For Christ, the King of righteousness,
There ever shineth bright.

The Lamb unspotted, white and pure,
To thee doth stand in lieu
Of light, so great the glory is
Thine heavenly King to view.

There love and charity doth reign,
And Christ is all in all,
Whom they most perfectly behold
In glory spiritual.

They love, they praise; they praise, they love;
They "Holy, Holy," cry:
They neither toil, nor faint, nor end,
But laud continually.

CHAPTER V.

Visit the excavations beneath the city and the tombs of the kings—A Sabbath in Jerusalem—The English church on Mount Zion—Bishop Gobat—His mission and schools, and the recent controversies regarding him—The Jews in Jerusalem—Their synagogues—Their social and religious condition—Their place of wailing beneath the wall of the temple court—Ancient remains in that neighbourhood—An excursion to Bethlehem—Places on the way—Valley of Rephaim—Well of the Magi—Convent of Mar-Elias—Rachel's tomb—Zelzah—Bethlehem—Church of the Nativity The town itself—Its mission-school—The field of the Shepherds—David's Well—The Hebron road to the pools of Solomon—Antiquity and extent of these works—Return to Jerusalem by Urtas, the gardens of Solomon—Trace the course of the conduit from the pools to Jerusalem.

IN describing the struggles of that desperate remnant of the Jews who continued to hold out against the Romans, even after Titus had gained complete possession both of the temple and the city, Josephus tells us, in his well-known history of that memorable siege, that the last hope of the survivors "was in the caves and caverns under ground." Secreted there beneath the foundations of Jerusalem, "they did not expect to be searched for, but endeavoured that, after the whole city should be destroyed, and the Romans gone away, they might come out again and escape from them." He adds that "this was no better than a dream of theirs, for they were not able to lie hid, either from God or from the Romans." The caverns, he informs us, were discovered, and "there were also found slain there above 2000 persons, partly by their own hands, and partly by one another but chiefly by the famine."*

* *Wars*, book vi. chap. vii. 3; chap. ix. 4.

Vague traditions as to these caverns had come down to modern times, but little or nothing was known regarding them, till within the last few years. In 1853, Dr. J. T. Barclay, a medical gentleman connected with the American mission in Jerusalem was made aware, by the Nazir Effendi, a Moslem dignitary in Jerusalem, "of the existence of an entrance to a very extensive cave near the Damascus gate, entirely unknown to the Franks."* This hint was enough. A party was immediately formed to find out and explore the cave. It was necessary to proceed with the utmost caution, in order to avoid exciting the suspicion of the natives. Provided with lucifer matches, candles, a mariner's compass, tape-line, &c., those who had undertaken the task left the city singly and by different gates, towards the close of the day. Having met at their appointed *rendezvous* outside the walls, they waited till the night fell. Under cover of the darkness, they then proceeded in search of the cave. The enterprise was crowned with complete success. After groping for some time along the bottom of the wall, the entrance was discovered. The loose stones and earth which blocked it up were removed. One after another they struggled through the narrow aperture, struck their lights, and advanced onwards and downwards, along the numerous galleries and vast cavernous chambers, till they had penetrated far beneath the city.

Several travellers had, since that time, visited these excavations, and not more than two hours after entering Jerusalem we sallied forth to attempt the same exploit. Mr. Hester was again our guide. Issuing by the Damascus gate, and turning to the right we strolled along the path that leads round the outside of the city, at a short distance from the wall. On coming near the place we looked eagerly round to see that no one was in sight. It may seem strange, indeed, that it should ever be possible, during day-light, to escape observation in the immediate vicinity of a large city. But nothing is more remarkable about Jeru-

* Barclay's *City of the Great King*, page 459.

saalem than the silence that reigns around it. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! . . . The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate" (Lam. of Jer. i. 1, 4). With the exception of two or three Turkish officers belonging to the garrison, there was not a living soul in view. The instant they disappeared we hurried across the trench-like hollow that lay between the path and the city wall. Till we reached the spot, the little hole by which we were to enter, concealed by weeds and rubbish, could not be seen. Not a word was said. Our guide led the way, and one after another, we wriggled in as quickly as possible. Once through the narrow opening the difficulty was at an end. Dropping down five or six feet from the inner end of the hole, we found ourselves in a huge cave, with the solid rock for the sides, roof, and floor, dimly seen by the help of the wax candles which our guide was already lighting, and placing in our hands. It was necessary, however, to advance with cautious steps. The floor of the different chambers and galleries that lay before us is full of breaks and cavities, ascents and descents, often quite sudden and precipitous, where, according to the motto of one of our old Scottish families, it was needful to "gang warily." Moreover, the passages are so numerous, they have so many turnings, and they are so like one another, that it would be the easiest thing possible to lose one's way, as once I did in the subterranean tombs of the Scipios at Rome. We had no ball of twine, like Dr. Barclay—no clew to unwind as we proceeded, and by which to find our way back, through the mazes of this stony labyrinth.

In order to try what risk there might have been, without some artificial aid, of getting really bewildered by the complications of the place, I endeavoured for a while carefully to note as we advanced, the direction we took, the size and shape of the arches, roughly hewn out of the solid rock, that led into the successive chambers through which we passed, so as to keep a sort of mental *deud-reckoning* of our course. Before we had got

half-way I found my chart growing quite confused, and that my recollections would have been utterly worthless to guide us out again. In order to be sure of not losing our way we steered by compass, as we had done across the deep. In addition to this invaluable help, we placed a candle at every new turn we took, and so as that we could always see the one last lighted from the next that we set up. These candles were to us like the skilfully placed lighthouses in our own Firth of Clyde. As the ship, coming up channel in the dark, makes her way from the Corsewall to Pladda, and from the Pladda to Cumbræ, and from the Cumbræ to Toward, and from the Toward to the Cloch, so were we enabled, by the distant glimmer of our candles, to navigate our way from beneath the foundations of Jerusalem back to the light of day.

Perfectly satisfied as to the sufficiency of this arrangement, we advanced with confidence to the very point reached and described by Dr. Barclay, where "water was everywhere dropping from the lofty ceiling, which had formed numerous small stalactites and stalagmites, some of them very resplendent and beautiful, but too fragile to be collected and preserved." * The stone being of a cream colour, like that of Caen and Malta, our candles lighted up even the largest chambers quite sufficiently to enable us to see all around us with ease. The cave was evidently partly natural, but as certainly it had, to a very large extent, been worked as a quarry. Traces of the workmen's tools were as fresh upon the walls as if they had been made the day before. Many large blocks were lying where they had fallen when detached from the sides of the cave, while others, with the deep grooves cut all round by the quarrier's pick, were still unseparated from the live rock to which they belonged. From the heaps of chippings that lay here and there in the galleries, it would appear that the stones had been hewn and dressed on the spot, before being removed. This circumstance has been

* *City of the Great King*, page 461.

thought to throw some light on a singular peculiarity connected with the building of Solomon's temple. "The house," as the sacred historian relates, "when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building" (1 Kings vi. 7). If this subterranean quarry extended to Moriah, the entire stone work of the temple may have been prepared close at hand, and yet where no sound of any tool of iron could be heard aboveground. Dr. Barclay estimates the point to which his party penetrated, as being 750 feet in a nearly direct line from the mouth of the cave. Another American traveller, by whom it was subsequently visited, "judged the length of the quarry to be rather more than a quarter of a mile." * As we were unprovided with a measuring line, I cannot pretend to decide, with confidence, between these varying estimates.

There can be no doubt, however, that the farthest distance hitherto reached comes very considerably short of the ground on which the temple stood. It is not improbable, indeed, that a more careful and thorough exploration of the numerous recesses and lateral passages of these vast excavations might lead to the discovery of galleries hitherto unvisited, and might even make it possible to pass under the entire city. There is a story told by Josephus, which proves two things: first, that such excavations as these existed long before his time; and, second, that some of them passed under the temple courts. Speaking of the attempt of Simon, the son of Gioras, one of the Jewish chiefs, to escape by mining his way out beneath the city, after the Romans had gained complete possession of it, he gives this graphic account of that singular incident:—"This Simon, during the siege of Jerusalem, was in the upper city, but when the Roman army was gotten within the walls, and were laying the city waste, he then took the most faithful of his friends with him, and among them,

* Quoted in *City of the Great King*, page 467.

some that were stone cutters, with their iron tools that belonged to their occupation, and as great a quantity of provisions as would suffice them for a long time, and let himself and all of them down into a certain subterranean cavern that was not visible aboveground. Now, so far as *had been digged of old*, they went onward along it without disturbance; but where they met with solid earth they dug a mine underground, and this in hope that they should be able to proceed so far as to rise from underground in a safe place, and by that means escape. But when they came to make the experiment they were disappointed of their hope; for the miners could make but small progress, and that with difficulty also, inasmuch that their provisions, though they distributed them by measure, began to fail them; and now, Simon thinking he might be able to astonish and delude the Romans, put on a white frock, and buttoned upon him a purple cloak, and appeared out of the ground, *in the place where the temple had formerly been.*"* With the seizure of the unfortunate Simon, and his being kept in bonds to grace the triumph of Titus, on his return to Rome, we are not at present concerned. Our interest in the narrative arises from the light which it indirectly throws on these excavations beneath the city, and from the additional probability which it lends to the idea that, within these subterranean quarries, the stones of Solomon's temple may have been hewn.

But while the proximity of these subterranean quarries must needs have greatly facilitated that peculiar arrangement, according to which the temple was to rise up noiselessly in the city, as if built by some invisible hand, it is not to be supposed that the existence of those quarries originated that arrangement. The arrangement, it seems impossible to doubt, had a typical meaning. The temple "made with hands"—the glorious material edifice where the Most High dwelt symbolically—was an intended figure of that "living temple" made without hands,

* *Wars*, book vii. chap. ii. 1.

which is now growing up in the souls of His people as an holy habitation unto God. This living temple was to be reared by the unseen and noiseless agency of the Holy Ghost, who with the silent force of the Word forms and fashions within the deep recesses of the human breast those "lively stones" which, being joined to the "Living Stone, the sure Foundation," shall one day adorn the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God.

There being still an hour or more of daylight remaining when we emerged from the cave, it was at once resolved to spend it in a visit to the tombs of the kings. These tombs, to which this regal title has been given, simply on account of their being by far the finest in or about the city, lie at the distance of half a mile north from the Damascus gate, and quite in the open country. The way to them led us through corn-fields, across which the numerous terebinth, karob, olive, and other trees were already throwing their long evening shadows, and reminding us that we had no time to lose. Looking at these fields, literally paved as they were with small stones, one felt disposed to wonder that anything should grow in them at all. We were told, indeed, by our intelligent guide, in answer to some observation of this kind, that a recent settler in Jerusalem, bent on great agricultural improvements, had begun his operations by having all the stones carefully removed from the patch of ground he had undertaken to cultivate. The result, however, served only to exhibit his ignorance of the country and climate with which he had to deal. The moisture left by the winter and spring rains in the soil, and which the shingly covering of small stones served to protect and retain, dried up and disappeared in a day when that covering was removed. His corn accordingly, like that of the parable, which had "no deepness of earth," soon withered away under the parching heat of the sun.

Although the space we were now traversing is at present of this rural character, there cannot be a doubt that, anciently, the whole of it was covered by the city or its suburbs. It was in this direction alone, as has been already noticed, that the city

admitted of extension. On all the other sides of its circumference, it was and is bounded by deep valleys, which must always have hemmed it in. Traces of the city are still abundant all over these fields in the form of numerous cisterns, and remains of old walls and buildings.

It cost us some trouble to light upon the object of our search. From the particular construction of the tombs in question, they cannot be seen from even a very limited distance. The general surface of the ground in their neighbourhood is besides very uneven; and the view is so interrupted by the olive groves, that it was only after beating about for half-an-hour, like dogs in quest of game, we suddenly stumbled upon the place. In forming these remarkable tombs, a rectangular space of about ninety feet square has first been traced out upon the surface of the ground, and then the solid rock, of which it was composed, has been quarried out to the depth of eighteen or twenty feet. Along one side of this square pit, and at the distance of six or seven feet from it, a broad path has been cut down in the form of an inclined plane. The wall of rock left between this sloping path and the large square pit within, has next been perforated at the lower end of the path, so as to form an entrance or gateway into the square. Descending this path, and passing through the gateway into the court within, the visitor finds himself in a large inclosure, open above, and with the live rock all around him. The tombs are on the western side of this inclosure. In the face of the rock on that side, a spacious and handsome portico has been hewn out. Though the pillars have been broken, the sculptured entablature still stands; for the pillars, which had also been cut out of the solid rock, however ornamental, were not needed as a support. The fine carved work of grapes and wreaths of flowers, running along the top of the portico, and still remaining perfectly entire, exhibits that combination of the Jewish and Roman styles that seems to have been common in Judea in the times of the Herods. The entrance to the tombs is within the portico, on the left side, and by a low door, the

top of which is below the level of the floor of the portico. When this floor was entire, the access to the tombs must have been completely concealed. Nor was this the only means employed to protect these subterranean sepulchres. The narrow doorway, not more than three feet high, had a ponderous stone door, which turned on stone hinges or pivots at top and bottom, like that of the dungeon of the Mamertine prison beneath the Capitol at Rome. This door had been evidently placed at such an inclination as to cause it to shut by its own weight. In addition to this, and outside of it, the door was shut in by a contrivance that deeply interested us. In the Scripture narrative of the burial of our Lord, we read that they "laid Him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre" (Mark xv. 46). Here we had before us the very thing which these words describe—the only case, so far as I know in Judea, in which that ancient apparatus for closing the grave's mouth remains to the present time. It is a large circular stone, shaped like a millstone, and set on edge. A deep niche or recess is cut into the solid rock to the left of the door, into which the stone might be rolled aside when the tomb was to be opened. When the tomb was to be closed up, the stone would be again rolled back into its proper place; its disk being large enough to make it not only cover up the entire doorway, but to enter and fit into another niche on the right side of the door, and thus completely to shut it in. In other words, the circular stone was large enough to overlap the door on both sides, and being caught by the niches within which its opposite edges rested, it would be kept firm in its position; and this the rather that the rut or groove cut into the solid rock in front of the doorway, and in which the stone travelled, had such an inclination as to prevent the stone from rolling back, or even from being pushed aside without the application of a powerful force.

Looking at this stone, as it stood within the deep groove or niche to the left of the doorway into which it had been rolled, we realized, as we had never done before, the difficulty to which

the pious women of Galilee referred when, on their way to the Saviour's tomb, "they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (Mark xvi. 3.) The stone, too, when rolled aside, as we saw it, into its niche or recess, would form precisely such a seat as one might sit on by the grave's mouth; thereby suggesting to us the position that was most probably occupied by the angel beside the empty tomb of our Lord, when the women of Galilee drew near. The lowness also of the door was in perfect harmony with what we are told of Mary Magdalene, that "she stooped down" in order to look into the sepulchre. Few will be at any loss to understand what an amount of additional interest circumstances like these gave to this ancient Hebrew tomb. They helped to place more vividly before us the whole scene of the burial and resurrection of Christ. It is the testimony thus borne at every step, so incidentally and yet so irresistibly, to the truth of Scripture history, and to the reality of the grand events which it records, that makes a journey through Judea so indescribably affecting to every Christian mind.

Passing through the low doorway now spoken of, we found ourselves in a chamber about nineteen feet square, out of which entrances led into several other smaller chambers, two of which were on a considerably lower level, and having stairs leading down to them. Connected with each of these smaller chambers were crypts, within which the dead had been laid. These crypts were small apartments, all, like the larger chambers, hewn out of the solid rock, and having shelves along their sides for the reception of the coffins. Over each of these shelves we observed a small triangular niche, evidently for the reception of the little tripod lamp that may have been kept burning in the tomb, or that was used when the tomb was visited by mourning friends, and the smoke of which, it was touching to notice, still remained on the blackened wall above. From the fragments that lay about the floor, it is apparent that in one at least of these sepulchral chambers, there had been sarcophagi of white marble,

elegantly sculptured and carved, and in which the dead had been placed. This fact, as well as the extent, the elaborateness, and the costliness of these tombs, have led all who have seen them to the obvious conclusion that they must have been the final resting-place of some illustrious family. Their real history, however, is quite uncertain. The modern Jews of Jerusalem have a story that they belonged to a great man of their nation—a man of princely wealth and munificence, who fed for months the entire population of the city during the fatal siege by Titus, after the public stores had been all consumed or destroyed. Dr. Robinson has adopted the theory that these were the tombs of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, who having embraced the Jewish religion came to live at Jerusalem, and where, as Josephus tells, her bones and those of her son Izates were buried. In describing the place of her interment, he speaks of it as being “at the pyramids,” which she had erected about three furlongs from the city. A tomb of the kind now described might very naturally have had pillars or obelisks of some kind erected near it, to mark it out from a distance, though no trace of them now remains. The greatest difficulty connected with this theory is the distance from the city which Josephus assigns to Helena’s tomb. The city of her time would seem to have come considerably nearer to this tomb than three furlongs. Dr. Barclay, the most recent writer on the subject, somewhat summarily rejects this whole hypothesis as “undoubtedly a mistake.” According to his view, they were the work of the splendour-loving Herod the Great. To my own mind, I confess the settlement of this question was greatly less interesting than the light already noticed which the tombs themselves throw upon some of the details of the grandest event of Scripture history. One thing is perfectly certain, that they were not the tombs of the kings of Israel. These we know, on indubitable authority, were within the city of David. We re-entered the city just when the gates were about to be closed for the night.

The next day was the Sabbath, on which, as usual, we “rested according to the commandment.” In the morning we attended

divine service in the English church on Mount Zion—a handsome structure attached to the British consulate, and enjoying therefore its protection. Bishop Gobat preached an excellent and faithful sermon to an audience of about two hundred persons. In the evening, I had myself the privilege of preaching to a considerable congregation, the bishop and his clergy being present, in what is called the Female Diocesan School, on the same world-famous hill of Zion. It does seem to be a pity that those rigid rules should have been carried all the way to Jerusalem, according to which, none but a Church of England minister, or none at least but a minister prelatically ordained, may appear in the pulpit of the only British Protestant church in the Holy Land. The men of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles, the men trained in the school of Him who frowned so emphatically on the narrow-souled principle, “we forbade him because he followeth not with us,” were they to come back to the scene of their former labours, would surely wonder much to find the preaching of the gospel fettered by such artificial restrictions as these. For the existence of these restrictions, Bishop Gobat is of course in no degree to blame. They are part of a church system to which, in his present position, he has no choice but to conform.

And here it is impossible to avoid saying a word or two on the unpleasant and perplexing controversies that have lately been raised regarding the bishop and his proceedings in Jerusalem. They are infinitely to be regretted, as being fitted to bring reproach upon a cause which, alas! is greatly too feeble as yet, in that part of the world to be able to bear without injury the stigma and odium which disputes of such a nature are sure to fasten on it. Various causes have had a share in producing them. From the first the high church party in England viewed with strong dislike the setting up of the Jerusalem bishopric. Its connection with unprelatic Germany was an indelible stain upon it in their eyes, while its very existence they regarded as an attack on the prerogatives of the Greek church,

which alone, as they seemed to think, has any rightful jurisdiction, in matters spiritual, in the Holy City. This radical objection of theirs to the entire institution has not, of course, been lessened in their eyes by the fact that Bishop Gobat is himself a German, and a man of low church views. Apart, however, from this particular element of controversy about the Jerusalem bishopric and its affairs, there appear to have been private jealousies and misunderstandings of a more local description at work in the Holy City itself. Church and state may be greatly helpful to one another when they are of one mind; but any dissension between them is sure to lead to most mischievous results. It is especially true of such yoke-fellows as these, that "two cannot walk together except they be agreed." There has evidently been some jar between the representatives of these authorities—the bishop and the British consul—in Jerusalem. There can be no doubt that previous though more private feuds and alienations had paved the way for the recent painful and public collision between them, in which the distressing and hurtful spectacle has been exhibited of the bishop resisting the consul's official mandate, and being put, in consequence, under arrest.

Though I have read a good deal of what has been published on this somewhat odious affair, I am not called upon, and indeed it would be a manifest impertinence on my part, to pronounce any more precise opinion upon it than this, that it is much to be deplored. It is calculated to weaken British influence in a country where it greatly needs at the present moment to be strengthened; and, what is still worse, to prejudice the cause of Christ. Such dissensions between men holding places so conspicuous, and still more the fact of these dissensions being connected, more or less remotely, with a Christian mission, are sure to give a handle against Protestantism to both the Greek and Roman churches in that country, and to prove an additional obstacle to the reception of the gospel by both Moslems and Jews.

In so far as the particular questions involved in these disputes are concerned, it belongs of course to the parties having

authority and responsibility in the matter—the London Jewish Society and the Foreign Office—to dispose of them according to their real merits. But it is hardly possible for any one, conversant with the real facts of the case, to doubt that they are questions which it needed only a little forbearance and prudence to have settled amicably, or to have prevented from arising altogether. The British public, and especially the friends of Christian missions in Judea, have unquestionably cause to complain that such prudence and forbearance were not exercised. Nor are these unseemly exhibitions the less but rather the more to be lamented that they should, for the moment at least, have compromised to some extent the credit and influence of men who have otherwise so many claims to respect and esteem, as Bishop Gobat and Mr. Consul Finn.

In so far as the disputes now adverted to have reference to the schools of the mission over which the bishop presides, I am bound, in common fairness, to testify that they seemed to me to be conducted with very considerable efficiency and success. These schools, at least those attended by males, are outside of the city wall, on the north-western verge of Mount Zion. They are large and commodious, well and solidly built, and surrounded by a lofty wall, which also incloses the English burying-ground. There were thirty-two boys present, sons of Syrian Christians, Jews and Mohammedans. I examined all the classes at considerable length—a friend who understood Arabic, but unconnected with the mission, being along with us. The boys of the senior classes spoke English; and in geography, Scripture history, and Bible doctrine generally, they answered as readily and accurately as most boys of their own age could do in our schools at home. In other branches the appearance they made was highly respectable. One's only regret in going over premises so large, and apparently so complete in their equipment, was to find the attendance so comparatively limited. In walking through the adjoining cemetery, after leaving the school, there was pointed out to us an ancient stair, which had been discovered by the

workmen while engaged in levelling the ground. It had lain concealed beneath enormous accumulations of rubbish, and had evidently led down the steep side of Zion from some postern in the ancient wall into the valley beneath. It was a further indication that there are many perplexing questions connected with the topography of Jerusalem which the spade and the pick-axe may yet be found to solve.

We subsequently visited the female school, which is within the city, and is also a very commodious building. There were twenty-two girls present, whose progress, both in sewing and in the other ordinary branches of education, as well as in religious knowledge, seemed to be on the whole satisfactory and encouraging. The difficulties of the mission, in such a community, are very great. Christianity has for long centuries been caricatured and disgraced in the eyes of both Mohammedans and Jews by the wretched superstitions, idolatries, and immoralities of the Greek and Latin churches. The native Syrian population is steeped in vice. The Jews are nowhere more intensely Jewish than amid the ruins of their former greatness. It ought not therefore, perhaps, to be greatly wondered at if the results of the bishop's mission be somewhat inconsiderable. They certainly correspond ill with an establishment so imposing and expensive as that over which he presides.

It is not improbable, indeed, that considerations of a political kind had quite as much to do with the planting of this Anglo-German bishopric in Jerusalem as a desire for the propagation of the gospel. It is well known that Russia has long made the Greek Church at once the pretext and agent of her aggressive diplomacy throughout the Turkish dominions, while France and Austria have been playing the same game through the Church of Rome. In these circumstances it was not, perhaps, unnatural that Great Britain and Prussia, the two leading Protestant kingdoms of Europe, should have been tempted to try whether they could not make some use of ecclesiastical machinery too. If, as is commonly supposed, views of this kind had a chief

share in the founding of the Jerusalem bishopric, the consequences that have followed can scarcely be thought, hitherto at least, to reflect much credit on the wisdom of such a policy. A head without a body—a bishop, that is, with but a scanty staff of clergy and no people—cannot avail much in the way of a counterpoise to Greek and Latin patriarchs, who count their priests and monks by scores, and their disciples by hundreds of thousands. If Britain is to maintain and extend her influence in the Levant, it must be through her own proper political representatives—her ambassadors and her consuls. There is some reason, indeed, to fear that the attempt to combine the political and the ecclesiastical at Jerusalem has served only to weaken both. Such a man as Mr. Consul Finn may reasonably think he has cause to complain when his official proceedings are interfered with or arraigned by an ecclesiastic, whose office, however high, neither does nor can give him any weight in a community where his co-religionists are so few, and over which he can, in consequence, exert no influence. In a word, the only effect of the presence there of so high a dignitary as a bishop may be, if it have not actually been, to weaken the consul's hands. The consul is the natural head of the British community in Jerusalem; but the presence of a bishop must of necessity divide this local supremacy. Neither can well be the satellite of the other, and the Jerusalem firmament is not large enough to find room for two suns. A mission more modestly equipped would have raised none of those questions of precedence which it is comparatively easy to settle in a large community, but which are almost certain to set a small one by the ears.

Having used the freedom of giving utterance to these sentiments, and having been led unavoidably to introduce the names of the two individuals more immediately concerned in the subject referred to, it is hardly needful for me to say that I have done so without meaning the slightest possible disrespect to either the consul or the bishop. Mr. Finn, her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem, is a gentleman of high attainments

and character, an accomplished scholar, an active philanthropist, and a sincere Christian; and who takes a deep and intelligent interest in the social and spiritual welfare of the people among whom he has long held his honourable official position. Bishop Gobat is equally well known to be a man of learning and piety; and whose previous career as a faithful and zealous missionary in Abyssinia attests his devotedness to the great cause in which he is engaged. As yet, it is but the day of small things with the English Jerusalem missions; but even the day of small things, no one who knows the history of missions, or who apprehends aright the worth of an individual soul will venture to despise.

The Jewish community to which the mission is specially directed, amounts, in the Holy City, to several thousands, though the precise number does not seem to be well ascertained. Robinson rated them at 3000. Sir Moses Montefiore gave them as high a figure as 7000. While, in a report dated 1854, and quoted in the recent work of Dr. Barclay, they are swelled up to more than 11,000. The real number lies probably somewhere between the highest and the lowest of these estimates. The quarter of the city in which they live is that which covers the north-eastern part of Zion right over against Moriah, the site of their ancient temple. From this large body of the seed of Abraham, the English mission claims to have been instrumental in bringing over about one hundred persons, including about thirty children, to the Christian faith. The Hebrew community in Jerusalem is wretchedly poor, subsisting chiefly upon the contributions of their brethren in other parts of the world. The report already noticed as quoted by Dr. Barclay, states that they have fourteen houses dignified with the name of synagogues, but only three or four deserving to be so called. Three of these we visited on the eve of their Sabbath. The audience in all the three put together did not amount to more than a few hundreds. They were in the act of assembling for worship when we entered one of the synagogues. There was no appearance of devotion in their deportment. The scene did not, indeed, so completely re-

semble an exchange or market-place as that which I had seen some years before in the great Portuguese synagogue at Amsterdam;—the noise was not so great, and the disregard of everything like the decorum becoming a place of worship was not quite so extreme;—but still there was an entire absence of everything like piety. Our little party, conducted by the Jewish missionary, Mr. Hefter, were standing on the small elevated platform on which the pulpit or reading-desk is placed, when the rabbi came in. Being informed who we were, he invited us to remain, and with an air of no particular seriousness, said, that if we pleased he would offer up a prayer in our behalf. In reply, we told him gravely, but kindly, that the only prayers we valued or confided in, were those that were offered in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah of the Jews. His proposal, poor fellow, was probably nothing more than his way of asking an alms.

The floor of their synagogues, which were all contiguous to one another, was considerably beneath the level of the adjacent ground, and this peculiarity is meant to be emblematical of the present abject condition of the Jewish race. They are "crying out of the depths" outwardly, that is; but they seem to know little of inward and spiritual humiliation. Like their fathers, they put the letter in the room of the Spirit, as if the Searcher of hearts might be put off with a sham.

The same evening we visited the Jews' "place of wailing." There we did see something that, at least, looked like sorrow. It is a retired spot, a narrow inclosed space at the base of the substruction wall of the temple area, on the western side of Moriah. The hollow, it will be remembered, that separates Moriah from Mount Zion is the valley of the Tyropæon, now filled up to a large extent by the debris of the ancient city, and by enormous heaps of more modern rubbish, growing upon which, every here and there, are dense thickets, and impervious hedges of the prickly pear. Some idea of the extent to which this filling up of the valley has gone, may be formed from the fact that where the city wall crosses this valley, the surface of the ground inside is not

more than ten feet from the top of the wall, while outside it is more than fifty feet. Even within the wall, however, the depression is still quite sufficient to mark the course of the ancient valley. The side of Moriah that dips into this valley had anciently to be faced up artificially with mounds of earth and retaining walls, so as both to expand and level the top of that sacred hill, and thus to provide adequate space for the temple courts. The whole of the south end of the Haram inclosure is underbuilt. The long ranges of arches and pillars on which it rests, have all of late years been fully explored. Up through one of these subterranean colonnades there had evidently been an approach from the south to the temple courts. Josephus says that Solomon "built a wall below, beginning at the bottom, which was encompassed by a deep valley; and on the south side he laid rocks together, and bound them one to another with lead, and included some of the inner parts, till it proceeded to a great height; and till both the largeness of the square edifice and its altitude were immense, and till the vastness of the stones in the front was plainly visible on the outside; yet so that the inward parts were fastened together with iron, and preserved the joints immoveable for all future time. . . . When the work for the foundation was done in this manner, and joined together as part of the hill itself to the very top of it, he wrought it all into one outward surface, and filled up the hollow places which were about the wall, and made it a level on the external upper surface, and a smooth level also. This hill was walled all round," &c.* This description occurs, not in the historian's account of the original building of the temple, of which even he could know little or nothing more than the Scriptures told him, or, in other words, than we know ourselves; it occurs in his account of the rebuilding of the temple by Herod the great, and seems to imply that the substruction walls built at the first founding of the temple remained till Herod's time, and therefore, no doubt, till his own, which was not long after. The interest-

* *Antiquities*, book xv. chap. ii. 3.

ing question is, Are the walls thus alluded to by Josephus the same which continue to the present day? There seems no good reason to doubt that they are. The ponderous stones of which they are built, as well as the peculiar style in which they are dressed, proclaim their great antiquity. But a still more conclusive proof of the fact is to be found in the discovery noticed in an earlier chapter, as having been made by Dr. Robinson, about twenty years ago. I allude to the remains of the viaduct that united the temple and Mount Moriah to the Hill of Zion. There it stands to this hour—the ascending curve of the first arch of that grand work—springing from the gigantic under wall of Moriah, in which the foot of the arch is firmly imbedded.

We approached and examined it on our way to the place of wailing. The stones are of vast size, several of them being upwards of twenty feet in length, and from five to six feet in thickness. The distance, as measured by Dr. Robinson, from the wall to the rocky cliff of Zion, on which the other end of the bridge must have rested, is 350 feet. The width of the bridge, as shown by the remains of the arch, would seem to have been upwards of fifty feet. The effect of this majestic viaduct, spanning with its noble arches the deep and rocky valley, and uniting edifices so imposing as the temple on the one height and the palace and citadel on the other, must have been truly grand. The question, indeed, is asked, Was the arch known in architecture so early as the days of Solomon? and till recently, a very confident answer would have been given in the negative. But the discovery of the arch in Nineveh—a city that was destroyed six centuries before the Christian era—and the fact of its being also found in the far older structures on the banks of the Nile, has thrown quite a new light upon the point. Dr. Barclay, too, in his recent work, in addition to the evidence now noticed as derived from Egypt and Assyria, refers to another corroboration found in Judea itself. Assuming, what is commonly admitted, that the pools of Solomon at Burak, were really constructed by that great prince, there is no longer any room to doubt that the

arch was known in Judea in the time of his reign. "Having," says Dr. Barclay, "after long waiting an opportunity, at last succeeded in exploring the room underneath the lowest of these pools, and also that of the 'Fountain Sealed,' by whose waters they are mainly supplied, I was delighted to find as veritable an arch as ever was made, and with a true keystone too; and not only arches, but vaults."*

There seems, therefore, reasonable ground to believe that the massive stones we were now surveying, belonged to that very viaduct by which Solomon himself passed from his palace to the temple; and the sight of which so filled the Queen of Sheba with wonder and admiration. There can, at least, be no question at all that they belonged to that very bridge which Aristobulus defended with such desperate valour against Pompey and his Roman legions; the bridge at the western extremity of which, a century later, that Agrippa, before whom Paul pleaded at Cesarea, harangued the Jews of Jerusalem when he sought to dissuade them from rushing into a new war with Rome. It must have been on the very top of the arch of which only this gigantic fragment remains, that in the terrific siege in which the city and the temple perished, Titus, the Roman general, stood when, appealing to those Jews who still confronted him at the farther extremity of the bridge, he strove to induce them to desist from a struggle which could end in nothing but their utter and inevitable destruction.

Leaving this deeply interesting spot, and proceeding northwards for about one hundred yards, we were conducted through an intricate labyrinth of narrow dirty lanes, into the little inclosure, close to the base of the great wall, which forms the wailing place of the Jews. It is a *cul de sac*, and resembles a long narrow court shut up at one end. There is a modern wall, not very high, on the one side of it, and the lofty colossal substruction wall of the temple area on the other. It was about five

* *City of the Great King*, page 102.

o'clock in the afternoon of a Friday, and therefore near the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, when we entered this remarkable place. Already several Jews, male and female, had arrived; and very soon after the number increased to thirty or forty. Most of them had in their hands portions of the Old Testament relating to the desolation of the temple and the city. These they read in a mournful tone, rocking their bodies to and fro the while, and with their faces turned towards the ancient wall. The women were louder and more impassioned than the men in their demonstrations of grief. Some of them sat on the ground at the bottom of the confronting wall, with their faces bowed down upon their breasts. Others knelt at the base of the ancient temple wall itself, and with their foreheads resting on the bevelled joints of its ponderous masonry, uttered, rapidly and vehemently, the touching and plaintive words in which prophetic Scripture represents down-trodden Israel as weeping at the remembrance of Zion:—"O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt. Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary. . . . They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground" (Psalm lxxiv. 1-3, 7). Or thus, again—"The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn feast. The Lord hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion: he hath stretched out a line, he hath not withdrawn his hand from destroying: therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament; they languished together. Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars; her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more;

her prophets also find no vision from the Lord" (Lam. of Jer. ii. 7-9).

Be it so, that in all this there is much that is formal and mechanical—an affectation of grief in which the heart has little share; be it that it has degenerated, in the case of many of those who frequent the place, into a mere national usage; how eloquent nevertheless it is! How full of solemn meaning and true pathos to every thoughtful mind! The Lord, when the cup of Israel's iniquity was nearly full, foretold the destruction of their temple and their city; and expressly declared that "they should be led away captive into all nations: and that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). And what a fearful down-treading for eighteen centuries has Jerusalem experienced! Meanwhile the Jew continues to this hour a wanderer without a home—dwelling everywhere, but established nowhere. Even in the land of his fathers he is a stranger; and yet how he loves it, and longs after it, and hovers around it, as the poor desolate bird flutters and cries around her torn and rifled nest! What a testimony does this scene in the Jews' wailing-place bear to the truth of that solemn saying—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away!"

In introducing here this reference to the Jews, their synagogues and their place of wailing, I have deranged a little the chronological order of things in my narrative. Having had occasion, however, to allude to that remarkable people in connection with Bishop Gobat and his mission, it seemed to be the preferable course to complete at once what I had to say regarding them.

Much refreshed by the rest of the Sabbath, we were all in the best possible case on Monday morning, the 27th April, for an excursion to Bethlehem and the pools of Solomon, the arrangements for which had all been made on the Saturday evening. In this delightful and deeply-interesting expedition, we had the company and guidance of Mr. Sandretzky, of the Church Mis-

sionary Society, whose long residence at Jerusalem and labours in Bethlehem itself, had made him quite familiar with all the scenes we were about to visit. Leaving the city by the Jaffa gate, and crossing the valley beneath at the lower pool, we rode up the somewhat steep ascent of the north shoulder of the Hill of Evil Counsel opposite to Mount Zion, and found ourselves all at once on the broad upland valley, or rather plain of Rephaim. The road to Bethlehem for nearly two miles runs along the eastern side of this fine and fertile plain, a great part of which has been acquired by the Greek Church, and exhibits in consequence a style of cultivation considerably in advance of what is generally to be seen in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Russian money is said to have largely aided in securing this fine property, and in erecting the extensive conventual establishments that have been recently built upon it. This broad and spacious plateau is commonly considered to have been the camping ground of Sennacherib's army, and the scene of that sudden and terrible display of Divine power by which it was destroyed.

Yonder lay the beleaguered city. The messengers of the blaspheming Assyrian have been at the gate; and the letter in which his insulting and threatening demand for the city's immediate and unconditional surrender has been placed in the hands of the king. What is he to do in this sore extremity? Happily he is one that knows the true secret of his kingdom's strength. He calls no council of war; but hastens to the temple and spreads out the letter before the Lord. It is not merely the throne of Hezekiah that is at stake, but the glory of the Great Jehovah—whom Sennacherib has openly defied. Not in vain, therefore, does Hezekiah plead. The Lord by His prophet Isaiah tells the king that "He will defend the city and save it, for His own sake, and for His servant David's sake." It is enough. The king knows not how it is to be done. But when the light of the next day dawns, the Assyrian host is found to have been "broken without hand." The valley of Rephaim rings with no shout of

battle now. It is all silent as the grave—covered only with the dead—

“Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with its banners at sunset was seen ;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strewn.”

Like most others around the Holy City, this route is at every step associated with some memorable incident. A short way beyond the southern extremity of the plain, there is a well in the very middle of the road, very ancient, but still in constant use, where, as tradition tells, the wise men of the East, when on their way to Bethlehem, got sight again of the guiding star that led them on “to the place where the young child was.” According to this monkish legend the night had fallen, and the weary Magi were sitting upon the well doubtful whither to go, when suddenly, as they bent over the crystal fountain beneath, the star’s reflected image appeared in the water. Though we could repose no faith in the story, it was not difficult to believe that at least the wise men must have passed this way, and may have drank, as we did, at the well. It was pleasing, moreover, to find the very road to Bethlehem still fragrant with memories of the birth of Jesus.

At this point the road begins to rise from the plain, and to ascend the rather rapid slope beyond it, at the top of which, and a little to the left of the path, is the convent of Mar-Elia. The tradition which connects the great Elijah with this particular spot, is obviously and entirely groundless. Here it was, says the legend, that, when fleeing from Ahab, the Tishbite laid him down, exhausted and in despair, under a tree to die. No—not here certainly, but far farther south, a day’s journey on in the wilderness beyond Beersheba, was the place, as Scripture expressly tells us, where the touching incident in question occurred. This, it may be noticed in passing, is only one instance out of many which seem plainly to prove that the authors of these stories must have been very imperfectly acquainted with the sacred

writings. There was something, however, about this height of Mar-Elías, much better than any monkish legend. It was here we obtained our first sight of Bethlehem. Standing on this eminence, both Bethlehem and Jerusalem are in view—the birth-place and the grave, the cradle and the cross, of the Saviour of the world! Behind us, at a distance of little more than three miles, the city where He accomplished His decease was distinctly visible; while before us, and somewhat nearer, was that other city, “so little” but so illustrious “among the thousands of Judah” out of which came that ruler “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah v. 2). What a life it was which began and ended within the little space of these half-dozen miles—a life, the fame of which is destined to fill the whole world, and to last through all eternity—a life that has brought glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men!

A mile or so farther on, a small solitary structure upon the open moor, about fifty yards to the right of the path we were pursuing, attracted our notice. It was the tomb of Rachel, the wife of the patriarch Jacob. No reader of Scripture can have forgotten the simple and affecting story of her death. Along with her husband she was journeying southward from Bethel, and “there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour And it came to pass when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, for she died, that she called his name Ben-oni (son of my sorrow): but his father called him Benjamin (son of my right hand). And Rachel died and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel’s grave unto this day” (Gen. xxxv. 16–20).

The present building has been recently repaired, and is now the property of the Jews, having been purchased for his nation by Sir Moses Montefiore. It cannot well be doubted, however,

that the tomb which it incloses is really that of the venerable mother of the tribes of Israel. The Scripture narrative all but identifies the spot. It is "near to Ephrath," and is in the direct route from Bethel to that place. The pillar placed upon the tomb by Jacob still remained when Moses wrote the book of Genesis, and when the people, of whom Rachel was the mother, were already about to enter into permanent possession of the land. A spot that must have been so hallowed in the eyes of the whole Hebrew race, was not likely to be ever afterwards forgotten. Josephus in speaking of it, instead of using the rather indefinite expression of the Scripture narrative "near Ephrath," employs the more precise expression "over against Ephrath." This circumstance at once suggests the idea, that down till his time the place continued to be familiarly known, and most certainly the words he uses are exactly descriptive of the position of the still existing tomb. The ridge on which it stands is the summit level, or water-shed, between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. On its eastern side one of the smaller valleys, branching up from the great Wady-Tāamirah, makes a deep cleft in the country between Mar-Elias and Bethlehem; and the ridge or backbone of the district, along which the Bethlehem road runs, takes a rather sharp bend as it advances southward round the head of this valley. It forms, in other words, a bow or curve, of which a straight line stretched right across the valley between the tomb and Bethlehem or Ephrath would be the string. The evidence therefore which supports the tradition amounts as nearly as possible to a demonstration. Here, one cannot doubt, it was that Rachel died and was buried. Nor can one help feeling, while standing beside her grave, that there is something singularly suggestive in the affecting occurrence of which this spot was the scene. The birth "over against Ephrath" would seem to have foreshadowed that other birth which many long centuries after took place at Ephrath itself. There, too, one was born who combined in himself, and that most emphatically, both of the names that were given to Rachel's son. The Son of Mary was in a

pre-eminent sense the Son of His mother's sorrow, for "a sword pierced through her own heart" as she stood at the foot of His cross. And yet in a sense still more pre-eminent, He was "the Son of His Father's right hand."

The view westwards from the neighbourhood of this tomb is very pleasing. In that direction the ground slopes rapidly down to the Wady-Ahmed, from the farther side of which rises a broad hill, thickly clad with olive groves; and half-way up the face of which appears Beit-Jala, where the country residence of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, a large and massive convent-like edifice, towers majestically above all the other buildings of the place. This Beit-Jala is now generally, and on good grounds, regarded as the Zelzah of Scripture, at which Saul found the asses of his father Kish that had gone astray. Beit-Jala is not only "by" or near "Rachel's sepulchre," as Scripture says that Zelzah was, but the names Jala and Zelzah have a close affinity if not a radical identity.

But Bethlehem is in sight, and we must linger no more by the way. In approaching it, and after rounding the head of the valley already spoken of as lying on the left or east side of our route, the road runs along the head of those beautifully terraced gardens which occupy the upper end of the valley, and which lend so much life and beauty to the immediate neighbourhood of Bethlehem. These gardens are full of vines, olives, and pomegranates, all carefully cultivated. They are watered from the conduit of the pools of Solomon, as it passes along the upper extremity of the valley on its way to Jerusalem; and hence the delightful freshness and vigour of the vegetation these gardens exhibit. Bethlehem itself is much better built than the ordinary towns of modern Palestine—a circumstance no doubt due to the fact of its being inhabited all but exclusively by Christians, members of the Greek, Latin, and Armenian churches. Its population amounts to about 2000. As might be supposed, we rode on straight to the celebrated Church of the Nativity, built, according to tradition, over the immediate birth-place of our

Lord. The town may be described as sloping away eastwards along the face of the yellowish limestone cliffs that overhang the south side of the terraced valley. The Church of the Nativity stands at the eastern or lower extremity of the town, on the very margin of a precipice which drops sheer down into the valley beneath. The church, together with the other extensive ecclesiastical buildings connected with it, have the massive and solid look of a fortress—a character indeed which, in so unsettled a country, they must no doubt have often sustained. Having rung the bell at the only door which gives access to the church from without, a small wicket was opened by a monk of the Greek Church, who led us at once into the interior. The nave into which the door admitted us, being the common property of the Greeks, Latins, and Armenians, has been allowed to go into complete disrepair. The rival sects cannot agree as to what each should pay for its renovation; and as in the case of the same part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, it is left to the natural process of decay. Its ancient mosaics, dimly seen in broken patches upon the wall, and the beams of cedar from Lebanon, which still support the roof, are all that now remain to indicate the grandeur of a church “once blazing with gold and marble, in which Baldwin was crowned, and which received its latest repairs from our own Edward IV.”* It was the work of Helena, the mother of Constantine. It is truly pitiable and humbling to find churches calling themselves Christian, thus quarrelling around the cradle of their common faith. This, indeed, is only one of the many similarly shameful spectacles which the so-called “holy places” of Palestine exhibit in the hands of sectarian bigotry and monkish superstition.

Things are in a better state in the choir and transepts, where each of the churches has had its own particular place and portion assigned to it. Here, as in Jerusalem, the Greeks have got the lion's share—a matter of evident pride and self-importance

* *Stanley*, page 439.

to the very shabby, unintellectual looking *Frats* who played the part of our guide. The poor creature had evidently no other or higher thought in his mind than to make us comprehend, if he could, how much more distinguished was the position occupied in the church by his own fraternity than that of the *Latins*. As for the Armenians, they were too inconsiderable apparently to merit his notice at all.

After we had seen whatever was deemed worth looking at aboveground, he led us down, with lighted tapers in our hands, to the subterranean grotto or cave, where we are asked to believe that the Saviour of the world was born. Here, in a small recess—on the *east* side of the cave of course—there are two altars; the one on the floor of the cave, and the other forming a kind of shelf immediately above it; the one being the property of the Greeks, and the other of the *Latins*. That which occupies the floor of the recess has a silver star let into the centre of it, and around it, in letters apparently of gold, is this simple but sublime inscription—“*Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.*” Another smaller recess opposite is pointed out as that in which stood the manger wherein the Saviour was laid. To accept the story is impossible. This could not have been the place which holy Scripture describes. Unable to find accommodation in the khan, or inn, thronged as it was by the multitudes whom the fiscal decree of Augustus Cæsar had gathered into their ancestral town of Bethlehem, the humble mother of our Lord had to seek a place of retirement, in the hour of her pangs, in an adjoining stable. Down that narrow stair, cut through the solid rock, and into this narrow cave, cattle could never have been led. No! not here was the scene of that ineffable mystery of which the angels spake unto the shepherds when they said—“Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” It was the fact that was memorable, not the mere spot of earth on which it occurred. Absorbed in adoring wonder of the fact itself, the men who were chosen to publish it to all the world, and who

alone could have told us with infallible certainty where exactly it took place, have been at no pains to enable us to identify it. As in the case of the precise locality of the cross and the tomb of our Lord, the sacred writers have left us no clue to guide us to the precise locality of his birth. It was not a religion of holy places, but of holy principles, they were commissioned to introduce. Enough that we know this—that He who was in the form of God, and who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man: and that He came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.

With a feeling of much greater confidence as to the identity of the place, we examined in an adjoining cave the cell of the famous Latin father, Jerome, the presbyter of Antioch, who, after his manifold wanderings from the Rhine to the Jordan, spent here the last five-and-thirty years of his life. In this hole in the rock, doubtless, it was that he executed his elaborate revisal and translation of the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history—a treatise which forms the ground-work of the post-scriptural history and traditions of Palestine.

From the church we proceeded to the mission school at the opposite or upper end of the little town. It is under the oversight of Mr. Sandretzky. There were about twenty young persons present, who seemed to have made tolerable progress in the more elementary branches of education. As we left the school we were surrounded by numbers of the people offering for sale the little trifles in which they chiefly trade—rude *intaglios* in mother-of-pearl from the Red Sea, and representing Christ, the Virgin, the apostles, &c., together with crucifixes, rosaries, and such like, made of the wood of the olive, or cut out of the agates and bituminous limestone rocks found in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. These articles sufficiently illustrate the kind of Christianity which, under the influence of the churches already so often named, lingers around the birth-

place of the Divine founder of our holy faith. From the very spot where the traffickers in these emblems of a religion of lifeless ritualistic forms were grouped around us, we were looking down on those fields immediately to the east of Bethlehem—fields clothed at that moment in the brightest green—where a not improbable tradition tells that the shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks by night, when the vision of angels appeared, to announce the advent of Him who taught that God is a spirit, and that they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The fields in question lie, so to speak, in the lap of the surrounding hills, forming a little limited space bright with verdure in the midst of surrounding desolation. The scene was suggestive. It reminded one of the moral loveliness, the infinite goodness, and beauty of Christ himself, surrounded by a world lying in wickedness. Far away, across the wild rocky wilderness of Judah that lay beyond these sweet and smiling fields, the eye rested on the mountains of Moab, rising up on the farther side of the wilderness like a huge rugged wall above the deep abyss, whose depths are filled by the Dead Sea. They bounded the view in that direction at a distance, from where we stood, of perhaps five-and-twenty miles. It was from that mountain country of Moab Naomi came back, followed by the loving and God-fearing Ruth, when she returned to this very Bethlehem to find a home once more in the land of her fathers. In these fields below the town, now waving with the yet unripe barley—for it was still green in this hill country of Judah—Ruth went forth to glean; and there she first met her new kinsman, Boaz, through her subsequent union with whom she was brought into the honoured line of the ancestry of our Lord. It was on these ancient and hallowed associations of the place, and not on anything connected with its present condition, we loved to linger; and speaking of the touching memories which the sight of it so vividly recalls, who can forget that Bethlehem was the native home of that shepherd-king who was among the most illustrious of the types of the spiritual King of



Israel? Among these hills the youthful son of Jesse tended those "few sheep," whom his jealous brethren unjustly accused him of forsaking. A little way beyond the upper end of the present town, the remains still exist of "David's Well." It is a large cistern or reservoir, and not strictly a well. Dr. Robinson was disposed to regard this fact as adverse to the theory of its being really the place of which David spoke when, hiding in his hold in one of the fastnesses among the neighbouring hills, he said—"O that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate." But as Dr. Wilson, of Bombay, one of the greatest of living Oriental scholars, remarks, the word used to express it in the original Hebrew is not that which signifies a *fountain*, or living spring, but that which means a pit or cistern. The locality quite accords with the Scripture narrative. The upper or northern gate of the ancient town could hardly fail to have been near it. The Scripture anecdote which tells how promptly David's wish—not only without his command, but without his knowledge—was obeyed, throws a most interesting light on his character. It beautifully illustrates, on the one hand, those attractive personal qualities which inspired his attendants with that enthusiastic devotedness that made them esteem it a privilege to risk their lives to please him. It brings out, on the other, not less impressively, his deep unselfish piety. "The three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it" (2 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17). Such a view as this beautiful story gives us of the heroic and yet gentle son of Jesse, helps us to understand how he should have "bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man" (2 Sam. xix. 14).

On leaving Bethlehem, we took the shortest course to the pools of Solomon. The road is the same that leads to Hebron, which lies about eight miles beyond the pools. For about two miles this road continues to run along the same ridge already spoken of as forming the summit-level, or water-shed, between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. This ridge spreads out, however, into a broader expanse as it advances southward from Bethlehem, rising up on the left to a considerable height, and, on the right, sloping down, at the distance of less than half a mile, into the Wady-Ahmed, a continuation upwards of the same valley, upon the farther side of which stands Beit-Jala. The road itself, or bridle-path—for it is nothing more—is extremely rough. The plateau along which it proceeds is, in fact, little else in many places than naked rock. At best, it is an open stoney moor, gray and weather-worn with the tear and wear of ages, and where the traveller may freely use his own discretion in striking out a course for himself. After somewhat less than an hour's slow riding, and passing over a slight ascent, we found ourselves descending into the upper part of a transverse valley, which, narrowing rapidly as it falls away eastwards, disappears, about a mile lower down, between steep and lofty hills. At the foot of the slope down which our road led us stands a large castellated Saracenic building, with an extensive courtyard. Though in tolerable repair, it is, like most buildings of the same class in Palestine, totally deserted. Not much seems to be known of its history. It is called Kasr-el-Burak, from the pools, or reservoirs, beside which it is placed. These are three in number, and occupy the centre of the valley, the uppermost being exactly abreast of the old castle or khan, and each of the other two being on a considerably lower level than the one preceding it. They are truly noble and massive works. The length of the pools respectively, beginning with the one farthest up the valley, is 582, 423, and 380 feet, thus making a total length of 1385 feet, or upwards of a quarter of a mile. The depth of the *first* pool, at the lower or east end, is 50 feet; of the *second*,

39 feet; and of the *third*, 25 feet. The medium width of the pools is rather more than 200 feet. These figures will suffice to show how large a body of water these reservoirs are capable of containing. They are supplied from the neighbouring hills by runnels of water carried underground from a very great distance—almost all the way, as we were told, from Hebron. This point, however, does not seem to have been very thoroughly investigated. The main fountain from which the pools are immediately fed, is situated at a short distance from the north-western angle of the upper pool. This fountain is a large and regularly vaulted subterranean chamber, nearly fifty feet long, and half as broad, into which, at four different points, the waters gathered from the surrounding country well up, and from which they are conducted by a passage underground onwards to the pools. Maundrell, one of the most pains-taking and accurate of our older travellers in Palestine, minutely describes this fountain; the entrance to which is still, as he found it, by a narrow hole like the mouth of a small well, and which is shut in with a large stone. Dr. Barclay, who, a few years ago, carefully examined the fountain, and who in his late work has minutely described its structure and masonry, concurs with Maundrell in regarding it as very ancient, and as being, in all probability, the work of Solomon. Dr. Barclay, indeed, is of opinion that this copious and perennial stream, so curiously hidden—itsself unseen, and yet the source of such perpetual blessing,—is the very original from which Solomon drew, in the song of songs, that beautiful idea which represents the church, the spouse of the heavenly Bridegroom, as “a spring shut up—a fountain sealed.”

The bed or bottom of the pools is the native rock. The side walls are built with regularly squared stones of great size, and in a style of masonry that bespeaks a high antiquity. The sides and bottom of the pools have been carefully coated with a strong cement. The powerful stream that issues from the sealed fountain is not all discharged into the upper pool. About one-half of its waters is let off through a lateral passage, into an open

channel that runs along outside of the pools. From this channel both the middle and lower pools are partially supplied, the surplus water falling finally into the main conduit which issues from the eastern extremity of the lowest pool, and which is continued onwards along the hill sides by Bethlehem to Jerusalem. Beneath the last and lowest pool is that other vaulted chamber, alluded to in an earlier part of this chapter, as having been explored by Dr. Barclay, and as exhibiting a perfect specimen of a regular stone arch belonging to the time of Solomon's reign.

Immediately beyond these pools the deep, narrow, and winding valley into which they lead rapidly down, presents a scene which, even at the present day, is one of singular sweetness and beauty. It is the Wady-Urtás, a term which is an evident corruption of *hortus*, or the garden; and is the locality which tradition has assigned to what may be called the "botanic gardens" of Solomon. It is hardly possible, indeed, to examine this interesting neighbourhood, without having the conviction carried home to one's mind, that here is the very place to which these words of that great king refer—"I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees" (Eccles. ii. 5, 6).

Josephus says: "There was a certain place, about fifty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, which is called Etham: very pleasant it is in fine gardens, and abounding in rivulets of water. Thither did he (Solomon) use to go out in the morning, sitting on high (in his chariot)." When one thinks of that gorgeous chariot, with its fiery steeds powdered with gold dust, and blazing like the flaming coursers—the Aethon and Phlegon, the Eöus and Pyroeis that were yoked to the car of Phœbus-Apollo—one might have been puzzled to comprehend how the royal charioteer contrived to make his way over these rugged hills, had not the Jewish historian also told us that "Solomon did not neglect the care of the ways, but laid a causeway of black stone along the roads that led to Jerusalem, which was the royal city, both

to render them easy to travellers, and to manifest the riches and grandeur of his government."* In the state of these roads at the present day, the exploit would be nearly as perilous as that of the reckless youth who undertook to drive the horses of the sun along the face of the sky.

The lower end of the Wady-Urtás is not a great deal more than fifty furlongs from Jerusalem; and there is certainly no other place within a similar distance of the royal city that seems to possess the same fitness, as to soil and situation, and the abundant supply of water, for the indulging of those horticultural tastes by which Solomon was distinguished. The Wady-Urtás is a garden still. It is in the hands of a Christian Jew, Mr. Meshullam, who resides in it, and who has nearly the whole of it in a high state of cultivation. After spending some hours at the pools, we descended into the deep and narrow valley to visit him, and were most kindly received and entertained under his hospitable roof. The fertility of this sequestered valley may be judged of by the fact, of which our host informed us, that it yields five successive crops in the year. It is quite a common thing with him to raise, within the twelve months, on the same field, such a rotation of crops as the following:—French beans, egg plant, Indian corn, potatoes, and lastly, a green crop, such as cabbage, cauliflower, or turnip. The secret of this extraordinary productiveness lies in the combination, which the Wady-Urtás enjoys, of a deep, inexhaustible soil, washed down in the long lapse of ages from the steep hills at the base of which the valley lies, along with abundance of water and intense heat. It is, in fact, a natural hotbed of the most perfect kind. Shut in by no artificial walls, but by the shelving rock-faces of the everlasting hills, one cannot look up from the midst of its fragrant fields, and fruits, and flowers, upon the bald and burning heights that hem it in on every side, without feeling how readily it might suggest to the poetic mind of Solomon the fine thought

* *Antiquities*, book viii. chap. vii. § 4.

to which he gives utterance when, expatiating on the characteristic qualities of the church of God, he says—"A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse" (Song iv. 12).

Reference has been already and frequently made to the conduit by which water is conveyed from the pools of Solomon to the Holy City. This conduit is carried, on the level of the lowest pool, the one from which it issues, along the face of the hill that overhangs the north side of the Wady-Urtás. There is a path running by the side of it nearly all the way to Bethlehem. By this path we returned, in order to trace the course of the conduit. Near the pools the water flows in tubes or pipes of baked clay, built round and covered over with stones. Farther on it flows in a small canal of mason-work, coated inside with cement. The conduit, as it proceeds towards Jerusalem, does not always follow a uniform level, but rises and falls in many places with the varying surface of the ground; thereby showing conclusively that the hydrostatic law, according to which water rises to the height of its source, must have been known to those by whom this ancient work was planned.

The fact that the conduit terminates within the temple area,—as on another occasion I had an opportunity of satisfying myself that it did, by tracing it round the western slopes of Zion, and onwards to the very point at which it disappears beneath the wall, quite near to the Haram,—affords all but conclusive evidence that its construction dates as far back as the times of the Hebrew monarchy. Subsequently to the final destruction of the temple and dispersion of the Jews, it is in the highest degree improbable that so expensive and elaborate a contrivance should have been adopted to bring so great a quantity of water to that particular place. The peculiar nature of the temple services demanded a vast and constant supply of water, as is sufficiently indicated by the existence beneath the temple courts of the enormous underground tank or cistern, of a circular form, 750 feet in circumference, recently explored by Dr. Barclay, and figured in his late elaborate work. But after the times of Judaism had come to an

end, there could no longer be any adequate or intelligible motive for making such a provision. For all the ablutions connected with Mohammedan worship, the other sources of supply within the city itself must have been abundantly sufficient.

As we rounded the eastern slope of the hill which forms the north side of Wady-Urtâs, the view which opened out was both extensive and striking. Far away to the east, on the verge of the horizon, was the ever-present and always impressive range of the mountains of Moab, one of the grandest features of the landscape throughout the whole hill-country of Judah. Between us and that distant boundary line, was spread out the great wilderness of Judah, lying in its rugged sterility before us, like a rocky desert ploughed by thunderbolts. A few miles to the right of where we stood, and looking down upon that desert from the margin of the greener hill-country to which itself belongs, was the Jebel-Fureidis, that is, Paradise hill, as the Arabs call it, otherwise known as the Frank mountain, and now beginning to be recognized as the Beth-haccerem of Scripture. We got our first sight of it two days before, from the summit of the Mount of Olives. We were now greatly nearer it, and could better judge of its shape and height. It resembles a truncated cone, and rises from 300 to 400 feet above the level of the country around it. "O ye children of Benjamin," said the prophet Jeremiah on a certain critical occasion, "gather yourselves together to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem, for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction" (Jer. vi. 1). This startling summons implies, *first*, that Beth-haccerem lay to the south of Jerusalem. In that direction the people must flee if danger was coming on them from the north. And *next*, it implies that Beth-haccerem was a well-known and conspicuous height, seen on all sides from far, and fit, therefore, to be chosen for the lighting of a signal fire to warn the whole country of the approaching peril. Both of these conditions the Frank mountain meets. It is nearly due south from Jerusalem, and a beacon

fire kindled on its summit would be seen east and west from the vicinity of the Dead Sea to the margin of the plain of Philistia, and north and south from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem to Hebron. Furthermore, by collating two or three different passages of Scripture, it seems to me to be capable of proof that Beth-haccerem was not far from Bethlehem. The second book of Chronicles, in enumerating the many "cities of defence" that were built or repaired in Judah by Rehoboam, arranges in one group "Bethlehem, and Etam, and Tekoa" (xii. 6). Bethlehem, therefore, was near Tekoa, and that Tekoa was near Beth-haccerem is manifest, not only from the fact that Jeremiah connects Tekoa's trumpet with Beth-haccerem's signal fire, but also from an incidental statement that occurs in the history of the reign of the good King Jehoshaphat. The armies of Ammon, Moab, and Edom were coming up from the south to attack Jerusalem. Encouraged by the word of the Lord, the army of Jehoshaphat "went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa" to meet the approaching enemy. Having at this point set their forces in battle array, they moved on with a company of singers for their vanguard, praising and magnifying the God of Israel. While Judah was thus marching boldly on, the enemy, seized with a sudden panic, fell in their confusion upon one another, so that when "Judah came toward the *watch-tower in the wilderness*, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped." This watch-tower near Tekoa was no doubt upon Beth-haccerem, the well-known signal station of the hill-country of Judah. In point of fact, the name of Tekoa still survives in the ruins of Tekûa, some of which are obviously of great antiquity, and which lies a little to the west of the Frank mountain—the very height which it is the aim of this argument to identify with the Beth-haccerem of Scripture.

As for this remarkable height itself, it seems to have played many parts in its time; a signal station among the earlier Hebrews; a place of strength under the Romans, to control the hill-

country of Judah; a royal retreat,—at once a fortress and a palace of pleasure,—in the days of the luxurious Herod; and finally, the scene of the latest struggles between the crescent and the cross. The remains of circular towers, of a large reservoir, of extensive walls, &c., still found upon it, together with the conspicuous shape and position of the hill itself, all seem conclusively to point it out as the identical hill that has figured so largely in the history of Palestine, from the times of Jehoshaphat to those of the Crusades.

Allusion has been already made to the grouping together in the Scripture history of "Bethlehem, and Etam, and Tekoa." In the sacred volume names are never jumbled together at random. The order in which they are arranged will generally be found to correspond accurately with their geographical relation to one another. In the passage above quoted, Etam is placed between Bethlehem and Tekoa. It is therefore no slight or trivial corroboration of the theory, according to which we have been identifying the Wady-Urtâs with the Etam of Scripture and the Etham of Josephus, that it is situated about midway between Bethlehem and that Tekûa, west of Jebel-Fureidia, which seems so evidently to be the Tekoa of Scripture. Upon the whole, therefore, we felt tolerably sure that we had been in the very gardens where Solomon often prosecuted those studies which enabled him to speak of all trees "from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall."

There are numerous vineyards along the route by which we returned to Bethlehem. In passing these we were forcibly reminded of the beautiful imagery of the prophet when describing how graciously the Lord had dealt with his ancient church and people. "My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein" (Isaiah v. 1, 2). *There* were the stones, partly gathered into heaps, and partly formed into walls to fence the vineyards; and there, also at in-

tervals were the little solitary towers where the watchmen of the vineyards lodged. In scarcely any part of Judea is it possible to form a vineyard without first going through the very processes of which Isaiah speaks, and especially that process of gathering out the stones. They cumber the very ground as did the Canaanites the promised land. To build them into walls, so as to form numerous narrow lanes through the vineyards, is often the easiest way to dispose of them. A still more perfect specimen of this peculiarity, than any we saw at Bethlehem, we subsequently met with at Ain-Yebrûd on our way from Jerusalem to Samaria. In the neighbourhood of that place, which abounds in vineyards, we rode for nearly two miles, hemmed in all the way between long lines of walls, rudely formed of the stones gathered out of the adjacent vineyards, and where there was often hardly space for one horseman to pass another. No doubt it was in just such a position the angel of the Lord obstructed the progress of Balaam. "For the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall." So unchanging are the customs of the East, that in riding through these "paths in the vineyards" of Judea at the present day, one can realize, without an effort, the very sort of scene that witnessed Balaam's memorable adventure in the neighbouring country of Moab, nearly 3500 years ago.

At Bethlehem we regained the road by which we had approached it in the morning, and from this point our course was over the same ground we had then traversed all the way to Jerusalem. As we approached the city we struck off to the right, while passing along the valley of Rephaim, and rode up to the highest point of the Hill of Evil Counsel, which looks right over the narrow gorge of the valley of Hinnom to Mount Zion. According to one tradition, it was here the conspirators met, in the country-house of Caiaphas, the high-priest, to concert their plans for taking away the life of Jesus, on the night on which He was

betrayed. Another tradition, however, as already noticed, places the house of Caiaphas, and the scene of that memorable night's proceedings, where an Armenian convent now stands, on the Hill of Zion. Upon the top of the height to which we ascended there are numerous and extensive remains of buildings and walls, though not apparently of any great antiquity. On its eastern slope, overhanging the deep valley of the Lower Kedron, and immediately above the Aceldama, the burying-place bought with the price of the Saviour's blood, there is a solitary tree, scraggy and sere, and which bears the ominous name of the tree of Judas. It has a wild, blasted, tempest-tossed look about it, that well accords with the gloomy legend which connects it with the traitor's suicidal end, and of which it at least served to remind us. It must have been just such a lonely and ghastly specimen of forest life which, when seen by Robert Hall, upon some desolate moor, suggested to him the idea of nature hanging out a signal of distress.

As we re-entered the city, near nightfall, by the Jaffa gate, our attention was called to the wretched hovels immediately outside of it, which are assigned to the lepers. It seemed like a remnant of the ancient law of Moses—"Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper." Many of the poor disfigured, and miserable looking creatures were hanging about their doors, ready to assail the passing traveller with a petition for alms. It were well if those who look upon them were to bear in mind that there is a far commoner and a far deadlier kind of leprosy of which the other, loathsome as it is, exhibits but an imperfect emblem; a leprosy which, unless it be healed, will effectually, and for ever, exclude its victims from the Jerusalem that is above.

CHAPTER VI.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre—Its traditions—Their fabulous character—Light thrown upon the subject by Scripture, and by topography of the ancient city—Dishonour done to Christianity by scenes exhibited around the pretended sepulchre of our Lord—Some account of these scenes, and of the miracle of the holy fire—Probable position of Calvary.

THERE is one place in Jerusalem which few who enter the city would like to leave it without visiting. Since the earlier part of the fourth century, it has been an object of the deepest reverence and most sacred interest to by far the larger proportion of the nominally Christian world. By that time the religion which began with a few peasants and fishermen of Galilee, had spread from the Baltic to Abyssinia, and from India to the British isles. The faith whose founder expired on a malefactor's cross, had been embraced by the Roman empire; and he who wore the crown of the Cæsars had recently become the avowed disciple of the despised and persecuted Nazarene.

Unhappily, however, while Christianity had been rising to this height of political ascendancy, its primitive purity had been suffering a lamentable decline. The Christian church, now loaded with wealth and honours, and wielding most formidable powers, was fast losing its grand primitive distinction as a "kingdom not of this world." Lifeless forms were rapidly usurping the place of great spiritual truths; and pilgrimages to the shrines and tombs of saints were coming to be regarded as better proofs of piety than taking up the cross and following Christ in a life of self-denying goodness and holiness.

It was about this period that an illustrious stranger appeared in Jerusalem. This stranger was Helena, the mother of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of Rome. By a dream, or by some other mysterious impulse, she had been moved, in her

old age—as those who have chronicled her doings tell—to undertake this journey, and especially to make inquisition for the very spot on which the Saviour suffered, and for the cross on which He died. Two centuries before, as some say, one of the imperial predecessors of her son had erected over Christ's tomb, a temple, if not also a statue of Venus, by way of pouring contempt upon the name and worship of our Lord. Time, however, and the many changes the city had meanwhile undergone, had so completely obliterated every trace and record of the exact locality, that when Helena came to seek for it, her long journey seemed as if it must prove to have been made altogether in vain. But the mother of the Roman emperor was no common pilgrim. It was a thing not to be thought of that the pious zeal which had brought her all the way to Jerusalem should come to nought. The case was worthy of a miracle; and a miracle accordingly came to her aid. The same divine instinct that prompted the enterprise, guided her to the grand object of her search. After long and laborious digging amid rubbish and ruins, lo! at length a rock is laid bare. The rock is found to be pierced with three holes, and beside it three crosses are lying. Beyond all question this is Calvary; and these are the crosses of Christ and of the two thieves between whom He suffered. But a great difficulty remained. The crosses were all alike; and how should it be known which was that of Jesus? Macarius, the Bishop of Jerusalem, was present, of course, on an occasion that was to bring such renown to his see. A happy thought struck him. "Let the suffering victim of some hopeless disease be immediately brought." According to some versions of this marvellous tale, it was one, not simply diseased, but dead, whose body was straightway carried to the spot. The body was placed in contact first with one cross, then with a second, but still there was no result. No sooner, however, does it touch the remaining cross, than the disease or the death, whichever of the two it was, instantaneously fled. Life, or at the very least health, was restored; and the great fact was complete of what is known in history by the sin-

gularly significant and suggestive name of the *invention* of the cross. This, it is to be presumed, is that same cross of which portions so numerous have been distributed among the worshippers of such sacred relics, that it is confidently said to have supplied as much timber as would have sufficed to build a seventy-four!

To perpetuate the memory of this amazing discovery, and to guard the spot from all future profanation, a splendid *basilica* was erected over it by Helena, of which, however, no part now remains. Two or three times over, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has been completely destroyed; but still there can be no reasonable doubt, that the church of the present day stands precisely where that of Helena stood.

It is hardly worth any one's while to sift out the few grains of truth from the huge pile of chaff and dust which pious fraud and monkish superstition have heaped up upon the floor of this ancient edifice. Almost the only thing to be relied on, in the whole story, is the fact that the mother of Constantine did visit Jerusalem; and that she, or her son, or the two conjointly, did build a church on the pretended site of our Saviour's sepulchre. The fact, already noticed in an earlier chapter, that the same lady fixed the scene of the ascension on the summit of the Mount of Olives, while Scripture tells us in so many words, that it took place at Bethany, far down the farther side of the hill, is conclusive as to the amount of reliance to be placed on the traditions of her time.

In visiting this world-famous church, we were most kindly favoured with the company and guidance of Madame Gobat, and had, in consequence, the advantage of being preceded by the bishop's tall cawass, with his long silver-headed staff of office, to clear the way of all interruptions to our progress. The church has a patched and half-ruinous look, which impairs a good deal the effect of such remnants of its ancient grandeur as are still to be traced in many parts of the building. After making our way through a crowd of dealers in crosses, rosaries, and such

like, who hang about the little court in front of the only entrance to the church, the first thing that attracted our notice was the guard of Turkish soldiers smoking their pipes immediately inside of the door. What are these Moslems doing here in a Christian church? It is not to bar the way, or to exact any fee for admission, for all who come are allowed to pass without question. To the shame and dishonour of the Christian name and faith, the guard is in attendance to keep order among the pilgrims who resort to this holy place. Few who know anything on the subject can be ignorant of the savage conflicts of which it is oftentimes the scene. During the Easter festival especially, when the church is crowded with thousands of pilgrims, all frantic with excitement, tumults and outrages are of frequent occurrence. Not even the wildest mixture of fun and fighting ever seen at Donnybrook Fair could surpass what has been witnessed, times without number, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

"Only suppose for a moment," says one describing what he saw, "the mighty edifice crowded to excess with fanatic pilgrims of all the Eastern churches, who, instead of lifting pure hands to God without wrath or quarrelling, are led, by the petty jealousies about the precedency which they should maintain in the order of their processions, into tumults and fightings which can only be quelled by the scourge and whip of the followers of the false prophet. Suppose, further, these thousands of devotees running from one extreme to the other—from the extreme of savage irritation to that of savage enjoyment—of mutual revelings and feastings, like Israel of old, who, when they made the golden calf, were eating and drinking, and rising up to play. Suppose troops of men, stripped half-naked to facilitate their actions, running, trotting, jumping, galloping to and fro, the breadth and length of the church; walking on their hands with their feet aloft in the air; mounting on one another's shoulders—some in a riding, some in a standing position, and by the slightest push are all sent to the ground in one confused heap,

which made me fear for their safety. Suppose, further, many of the pilgrims dressed in fur caps, like the Polish Jews whom they feigned to represent, and whom the mob met with all manner of contempt and insult, hurrying them through the church as criminals who had been just condemned, amid loud execrations and laughter, which indicated that Israel is still a derision among those heathens, by whom they are still counted as sheep for the slaughter."*

It is, however, when the great miracle of the occasion has been accomplished that the frenzy reaches its height. And what is this pretended miracle? One almost trembles to name the horrid impiety. It is nothing less than the descent of the Holy Ghost in the form of fire! To make this hideous fraud the more detestable, it is enacted within the very tomb which they profess to regard as that in which the body of the crucified Redeemer lay. There, in the middle of the floor of the vast edifice, immediately beneath the central point of the lofty dome, stands a sort of *catafalque*, like a miniature temple, built, or at least cased, with white marble, and within is the pretended tomb. In this small *chapelle ardente* of the sacred edifice, lighted up with its massive lamps of silver and gold, the miracle is wrought.

It is on the Saturday of the Greek Easter week that this daring impiety is annually perpetrated. When the hour for this crowning event of the festival arrives, processions of bishops and priests, arrayed in their most splendid robes, are seen advancing with gilded crosses uplifted, and flaunting banners displayed. The dense crowd closes in on all sides around them. The procession is ere long buried in the living mass. At length the Moslem soldiers, by sheer force and violence, cleave a path through the heart of the tumultuous throng for an aged hierarch—the representative for the day of the Greek patriarch, and known in the ceremonial as the Bishop of the Fire—who is dragged rather than led along to the narrow door that opens into the sepulchre. The

* Calman, quoted by Dr. Wilson, in *Lands of the Bible*, vol. ii.

moment he enters, the door is locked; the tumult is hushed, and the excited multitude, gathered many of them from the far-off banks of the Don or the Vistula, await, in a state of feverish expectancy bordering on madness, the awful mystery that is now at hand. They have heard of it in their distant homes, from the days of their childhood. Now they are in Jerusalem. Now they are in the very presence of the sepulchre, and with their own eyes they are about to behold this wonder of wonders..

The time seems long. Murmurs of impatience begin to be heard. Is the sacred sign of the Divine presence to be withheld! The whisper goes round that it is the presence of those Moslem soldiers, those followers of Mohammed, that is threatening to rob them of the expected privilege. The whisper becomes a shout of rage, and they rush upon the guards and force them to retire. And now again the hush of deep suspense passes over, and stills this lately surging sea. What is that light that suddenly flashes through the small round aperture in the solid wall of the tomb? It is the holy fire! The torch on which it burns is projected through the opening, and the lofty roof rings and shakes with the wild shout of exultation that rises on the instant from around the sepulchre, and reverberates through the remotest aisles.

And now a frightful scene occurs. Mad with eagerness to light their torches and candles at the holy fire, the pilgrims struggle, as in a case of life and death, to get near the tomb. Those who have their station beside the coveted spot, have their lights snatched from them, and are themselves sometimes trodden down and trampled to death. Meanwhile the smoke, and stench and flame of the countless candles and torches to which, from one to another, the fire is communicated, together with the shrieks of pain and yells of triumph that fill the air, combine to produce a scene that could be likened to nothing but pandemonium.

It was in the eagerness to escape from these suffocating va-

pours, that, about twenty years ago, a catastrophe occurred, of a truly appalling kind. The rush to get out into the open air was so sudden, and so vehement, that the Turkish soldiers in the vestibule were seized with the idea that the half frantic pilgrims had determined to destroy them, and to attack and burn the city. In the frenzy created by this groundless imagination, they drove back the thronging press of pilgrims with the bayonet; but these again being driven forward by the accumulating force behind, a frightful struggle ensued, in which not fewer than 400 persons were slain or trodden to death.

While the Easter festival is going on, there sits in a hanging gallery, far up the inner circumference of the lofty dome, the Turkish pasha, looking down on the scenes that have been described; and there, in the face of Mohammedanism is Christianity turned, by its own professing disciples, into a hissing and a scorn. Though the true Calvary is certainly not here, yet here undoubtedly Christ is crucified afresh, and put to an open shame. When we contemplate this revolting spectacle in which so-called Christian churches would seem to have conspired to expose their religion to contempt in the face of its bitterest foes; and especially when one thinks of all this as being done in Jerusalem, how terribly appropriate to this once holy city does that language become, that speaks of "Sodom where our Lord was crucified."

It is to be hoped, however, that at least the scandalous imposture of the holy fire will not be able much longer to face the continually increasing abhorrence with which it is regarded. The Latin or Papal Church has for some time ceased to countenance it; though one may, without any breach of charity, have doubts as to the perfect purity of the motives which have led to this result. The Greek Church having a monopoly of the miracle, the Latins could more easily afford to frown upon it—especially when they found all Europe beginning to cry shame upon the disgraceful exhibition. The annual liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples, the bleeding pictures, and

winking Madonnas at Rome and elsewhere, all going on under the express sanction of the authorities of the Papal Church, may reasonably enough warrant any one to suspect that no higher motives than those of jealousy and policy have had much to do with their ceasing to stand up for the miracle of the holy fire. It is understood that, within the last few years, the Armenian Church also, and it is to be hoped under better influences, has refused to lend itself any longer to this impudent and disgusting deceit. That it is still, however, in apparently undiminished favour and honour with the Greek pilgrims is abundantly manifest. Almost every male pilgrim we met returning from the Easter festival, as we were coming up from Jaffa to Jerusalem, had a long tin case slung over his shoulder, or strapped across his saddle bow, and containing, as we were informed, candles that had been lighted at the holy fire.

When describing, in a former chapter, the general appearance of Jerusalem as seen from the summit of the Mount of Olives, allusion was made to the surprise a stranger must feel at finding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, not in the outskirts, but in the very centre of the city. There is no intelligent or self-consistent theory of the topography of the Jerusalem of our Lord's times, that can possibly be reconciled with the supposition of Calvary and the garden in which Christ was buried having been in that place where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre stands. The utter worthlessness of the old tradition upon the subject has been already noticed. That, however, is only negative evidence. There is positive proof that the real locality could not have been there.

Scripture is explicit on the point that Christ was crucified "without the gate"—not far off, but still at some limited distance from the city. The garden which contained Joseph of Arimathea's tomb was "nigh at hand" to Calvary; and of course it also was beyond the limits of the city. The simple question, therefore, is,—Was the site of the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre within or without the bounds of the ancient

city? The ancient city had ultimately three walls: the *first* inclosing Zion, or the City of David, which was the oldest of all; the *second*, which dates further back than the reign of Hezekiah, and which extended from the gate of Gennaath, adjacent to the tower of Hippicus, onwards to the tower of Antonia, at the north-western extremity of the temple; and the *third*, which also beginning at Hippicus, swept round the open plateau that lies on the north-western side of the present city.

Now, it is true, that this *third* and latest wall, the work of Agrippa, was not built till about twelve years after the crucifixion, and, therefore, that the large additional space which it inclosed was not, at the date of that ever-memorable event, in the strict and technical sense of the expression, within the city. At the same time, it was undeniably at that date, and for long before it, to all practical intents and purposes, part of the city. It was solely for its defence and protection, as being a part of the city, that the third wall was built. It is, therefore, impossible to dispute the fact that, at least the entire extent of this large and important suburb lay between the sight of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the open country at the time of our Lord's death. This single circumstance might, of itself, suffice to set aside the tradition on which the claims of that site are founded. But the argument against these claims is strong enough to be able to dispense with even this consideration, impartial and weighty as it is. It can be proved that the site in question is within the limits, not merely of the third, but of the *second* wall, and that it must, therefore, in the most rigid and absolute sense of the words, have been, at the time of the crucifixion, within the city. The second wall, as already noticed, began at the gate of Gennaath, and ended at the tower of Antonia; and if this wall had run in a straight line between these two points, the site in question would no doubt have been left outside of it. But the wall did not run in a straight line. To this conclusion we should be forced to come, even had we no other evidence to guide us than what is supplied by the lie of

the ground, and by the known size and form of the part of the city which the second wall inclosed. But we have evidence of a still more direct and decisive kind. Josephus expressly describes the wall as making a large curve. Moreover, in his account of the siege of the city by Titus, he alludes to this second wall in terms which it is impossible to explain, except on the supposition of its having run *first* in a northerly direction, from Hippicus to near the present Damascus gate, and then, after bending thereabouts, having swept along the south-western side of the hollow which still traverses the city at this point, and which, with Van de Velde and others, I am disposed to regard as the upper part, and the true continuation, of the valley of the Tyropœon. To this day there are massive remains near the Damascus gate, evidently belonging to an ancient city wall, and that correspond entirely, in respect of their position, with the view now given of the course the second wall followed. According to this view, which the nature of the ground, the testimony of Josephus, and these existing remains, combine to support, the second wall must of necessity have passed considerably to the east of the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and that site must, accordingly, have lain entirely within the city. It may therefore be regarded with perfect confidence as a thing demonstrated, that it was not there our Lord was either crucified or buried. And who does not feel that there is positive relief and comfort in this thought? It is painful enough that the spectacle above described should be exhibited anywhere; but it would be far more painful still, if one could believe that such shameful outrages upon common decency, humanity, and truth, were actually desecrating the very spot on which was consummated the redemption of the world.

As regards the real scene of the Saviour's death and burial nothing certain is, or perhaps can be, known. The tower and palace of Antonia would seem to have been the ordinary, if not also the official residence, when he was present in Jerusalem, of the Roman governor; and here, no doubt, our Lord was con-

demned. In the course of the ever-memorable day of His trial He had been sent unto Herod, whose palace, as Josephus tells us, adjoined to Hippicus, and was consequently on the west side, as Antonia, the residence of Pilate, was near the east side of the city. Twice, therefore, must Jesus have traversed the city before His sentence was pronounced. It seems unlikely that He would be conducted through it a third time after He had been actually condemned. Considering the intense excitement that prevailed among the people, the fear which the Jewish rulers evidently had of a rescue, and the extreme care which the Roman authorities were accustomed to exercise to guard against public tumults, it seems natural to conclude that He would be led forth to execution by the way that should soonest bring him outside the walls. To have conducted Him to where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands would not indeed have required them to go far—for it is not more than 400 yards distant from the site of the tower of Antonia—but, at the same time, it would have been to take Him through the most crowded part of the city, and to have put Him to death in the very heart of the population.

How much better does it accord, both with the facts of Scripture history and with all the natural probabilities of the case, to suppose that Calvary lay in the upper part of the valley of the Kedron, outside, but not far removed from the city's north-eastern wall. To reach this place it would not be necessary to cross the city at all. The outworks of Antonia must have reached almost, if not altogether, to the present St. Stephen's gate. Here the procession would emerge almost at once from the narrow and crowded streets into the open country. Above this point the valley of the Kedron gradually widens out, while its sides become much less steep. The broad terraces of the shelving limestone which occupy this part of the valley on the side next the city seem equally suited for gardens and for tombs. There are many tombs cut out of the rock remaining there still; and the numerous olive trees growing beside them sufficiently show that there

is there, even yet, abundance of garden ground. From the walls of the adjacent city on the west, and from the confronting slopes of the Mount of Olives on the east, thousands and tens of thousands might look on and see this great sight—the bush burning and yet not consumed! No! not consumed; for from the ashes of that fire came forth the Resurrection and the Life!

But now that we have disposed of the tradition, let us at length enter the church. We are in no danger, after what has been told, of looking with any other than very matter-of-fact eyes, either at the building or at anything it contains. Not, indeed, that I intend minutely to describe what is familiar to every reader of works on Palestine; and what, moreover, without a plan of the edifice, would be in great measure unintelligible. The place is, in fact, a tangled maze, from which, on emerging into the open air, hardly anything very precise or definite remains in ordinary memories beyond a confused impression of winding stairs and dark passages, of ascents and descents, of low-browed vaults and gloomy recesses, with a great rotunda and a Greek church in the middle of them, and which this complicated network of lesser chambers, and chapels, and shrines, and tombs, somehow or other surrounds.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre may, in fact, be not unfairly represented as a sort of museum of sacred places, where priestcraft has contrived to bring together a collection that would be wonderful, if it were not nearly all a lie. Here, as they tell us, we have not only Calvary where our Lord was crucified and the tomb to which His sacred body was consigned, the pillar to which he was bound while His enemies scourged Him and the stone on which He sat while they, in impious and cruel mockery, arrayed Him in the crown of thorns; but besides all these, there is here the tomb in which Joseph of Arimathea was buried, and that of Nicodemus; the tomb of Melchizedec, and the tomb of our great first parent, Adam, himself. We have here, moreover, in the nave of the building, which forms the Greek church, a circular slab of marble let into

the floor, and marking the exact centre of the earth! The Saviour himself, according to the tradition, pointed out the spot with His own finger, thereby fulfilling the words of the ancient prophecy—"For God is my king of old, making salvation in the *midst of the earth!*" It is not easy, nor is it even desirable, to read or to hear such things without experiencing a strong feeling of mingled indignation and disgust.

Among the few real and true things which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre contains, are the tombs of the chivalrous Godfrey de Bouillon, the first of the Crusaders who became king of Jerusalem, and of his brother Baldwin, who succeeded him in that illustrious but perilous throne. The monuments, however, which had been erected over the ashes of these great champions of the Latin Church, after suffering, long centuries ago, great indignities at the hands equally of Moslems and of Greek Christians, were at length finally destroyed in 1810.

The Greek church is the only part of the present building which is in good repair. It is about 100 feet in length by 40 in breadth. The fire which in 1808 so terribly defaced and ruined the whole edifice, spared the piers and arches of the central lantern of the nave, which still remains therefore to illustrate the architecture of the Crusades. The decorations of the church, its lamps and chandeliers, and numerous pictures, bespeak a lavish expenditure of wealth, but a lamentable lack of taste. The rotunda, the other principal feature of the building, is 67 feet in diameter, and is encircled by eighteen massive piers which support the clerestory and the dome which roofs in the whole. The rotunda, not being the exclusive property of any one of the rival churches, but open and accessible equally to them all, has been allowed to go into a state of most unsightly and scandalous disrepair. The dome is rent in various places, and every here and there the sky may be seen shining through it. Its decorations, such as they are, have the faded and tattered look of a deserted theatre.

The Holy Sepulchre itself, which, as already mentioned, occu-

pies the middle of the floor, is 26 feet long by 18 broad. It is divided into two chambers. Entering it by a low door at the eastern end, the visitor finds himself in what is called the chapel of the angel, so named as being the pretended place where the angel sat after rolling away the stone from the door of the tomb; and which stone, or at least a fragment of it, is there, of course, to this day! Passing through this outer and larger chamber, the visitor is admitted by another, and still smaller and narrower, door into the sepulchre itself. It is a vault 7 feet long by 6 broad, with a dome roof supported on short marble pillars. The shelf or couch for the reception of the dead occupies the whole length of the right side of the sepulchre, and is elevated about 3 feet above the ground. It is now used as an altar, and is covered with pictures and tasteless ornaments, while over it are suspended forty-two lamps of gold and silver, which are kept continually burning. The whole interior of the vault is cased with marble. If there really be native rock within, it is completely concealed. The confined air in this small apartment, loaded too as it is with the fumes of incense, made one glad to escape as soon as possible from a place which, to the mind of an enlightened Christian, can have few other associations than those of fraud and superstition.

The claims of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to be regarded as the true site of Calvary, and of the burying-place of our Lord, have given rise, as is well known, to a voluminous controversy. Ever since the sturdy, honest, out-spoken German, Korte, about a century ago, ventured to dispute the previously unquestioned tradition, one writer after another has risen up to assail it. Archæology, history, and topography have all been brought into the field against it, and that with such fatal effect, as to have left few to support it, save those whom ecclesiastical prepossessions have bound over to a foregone conclusion. Among those who have discussed the question with adequate learning and candour, no one occupies a more distinguished place than Dr. Robinson, and these are the words in which he delivers his

mind regarding it: "In every view which I have been able to take of the question, both topographical and historical, whether on the spot or in the closet, and in spite of all my previous prepossessions, I am led irresistibly to the conclusion that the Golgotha and the tomb shown in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are not upon the real places of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. The alleged discovery of them by the aged and credulous Helena, like her discovery of the cross, may not improbably have been the work of a pious fraud. It would, perhaps, not be doing injustice to the Bishop Macarius and his clergy, if we regard the whole as a well-laid and successful scheme for restoring to Jerusalem its former consideration, and elevating his see to a higher degree of influence and dignity." In every word of that statement, and after having studied the subject according to the best of my means and ability, both in books and in the actual localities concerned, I entirely agree.

It is true, no doubt, as Stanley remarks, that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has, since the age of Constantine, "been revered by the larger part of the Christian world as the scene of the greatest events of the world's history, and has itself, in time, become for that reason the centre of a second cycle of events, of incomparable less magnitude, indeed, but yet of an interest in the highest degree romantic." I am altogether unable, notwithstanding, to contemplate the place with even that modified reverence with which he seems disposed to regard it. I willingly allow, indeed, that "no thoughtful man can look unmoved" on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. But it is not reverence, in any sense, or to any extent, as it seems to me, which the sight is fitted to inspire. A place where such foul dishonour has been done to the Saviour's blessed name and cause, a thoughtful Christian can hardly regard with any other feelings than those of sorrow and shame, not unmingled, perhaps, with indignation and abhorrence. It certainly does not tend to alter this state of feeling to know, as all the world does, that while selfish and interested ecclesiastics have, for ages, been making use of the

Church of the Holy Sepulchre to practise upon the ignorance and superstition of the multitudes who annually flock to visit it, secular statesmen, on the other hand, have been not less sedulously, and just as selfishly, labouring to turn it to account for purposes of political aggrandizement and ambition.

So lately as the year 1836, when the Prince de Joimville made his appearance in Jerusalem, plans were laid to have the custody of the sacred places of the city transferred entirely from the Greek to the Latin Church ; in other words, to secure for France, the Pope's patron, a means of influence in the East, of which, through the Greek Church, Russia hitherto has possessed the lion's share. In consequence of the intrigues thus commenced, such representations were shortly afterwards made by Louis Philippe's government to that of the Porte, that a firman, it is confidently said, was actually issued, commanding the Greek patriarch at Jerusalem to surrender the holy places into the hands of the authorities of the Papal Church. A seasonable bribe is understood to have procured the setting aside of this extraordinary decree. But the object aimed at was not therefore abandoned or forgotten. Under the present Emperor of the French it was again pressed so vigorously at Constantinople five or six years ago, as to have assisted not a little in bringing on that collision with the czar, the real autocrat of the Greek Church, which was ultimately fought out upon the bloody battle-fields of the Crimea. How shocking and how sad that, around the pretended tomb of Him who came to give light and peace to this dark and distracted world, so-called Christian churches and so-called Christian princes should be combining to take both light and peace from the earth.

In connection with this reference to the rival sects and churches which are all represented in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and whose claims and contentions have so grievously disgraced religion, and so often set the world on fire, it may not be out of place to notice, in a sentence or two, their respective numbers in Jerusalem, and in the Holy Land at large.

The latest authority on this subject is one that appeared when

this volume was about to be sent to the press. I allude to Murray's truly admirable *Handbook for Syria and Palestine* well known to have been prepared by the Rev. Mr. Porter, of Damascus, than whom it would have been difficult to find one more competent to the task which he has so ably executed. According to his estimate, the adherents of

The Greek Church in Jerusalem amount to	...	...	1500
„ Latin „ „	...	..	1200
„ Armenian „ „	...	...	280
„ Greek Catholic „ „	...	...	110
„ smaller sects, such as the Syrian, Coptic, and Abyssinian,			150
In all,	...	...	3240

To these, in making up the entire population of the Holy City, he adds:

Jews,	...	...	...	...	...	6000
Moslems,	...	...	...	...	...	4000
Protestants,	...	...	...	...	...	100
Total population of Jerusalem,	...					13,340

The extent, however, to which this estimate differs from that of other authorities upon the point, serves only to show how little reliance can be placed on the statistics of the Holy Land. While some writers of note rate the population of Jerusalem so low as 10,000, others carry it as high as 30,000. Those residents in the city with whom I conversed upon the subject, and whose means of information seemed to be such as to enable them to form a tolerably correct opinion regarding it, generally estimated the population at 18,000 or 19,000.

The uncertainty that prevails as to the numbers belonging to the several sects and churches in the Holy City, prevails not less as to the numbers of their adherents in the country at large. Mr. Porter, for example, sets down "the total number of those who belong to the Greek Church in Syria and Palestine at 115,000;"* while Dr. Wilson, in his *Lands of the Bible*, esti-

* *Handbook*, page xliii.

mates the Greek Church as "numbering there a population of 345,000 souls."* He adds, that "the other Christian bodies embrace only about 260,000 souls;" whereas Porter states that "the other Christian sects put together amount to 326,000." The result is, that while the latter authority gives the total of Christians in Syria and Palestine as 441,000, the former swells them up to 595,000. It will probably be safe to estimate the real number at somewhere about 500,000.

The one item in the estimate, as to which there is unhappily no difference of opinion, is that which refers to the very small number of Protestant Christians to be found in Judea. Out of Jerusalem itself there is scarcely one to be found. It would seem to have been part of the curse which the heinous national sin of the Jews, in rejecting and crucifying their Messiah, brought down upon their unhappy country, that not they themselves alone have been banished out of it, but pure Christianity too. Not otherwise, indeed, could either the greatness of their guilt or the terribleness of its punishment have been made sufficiently manifest. But it will not be always thus. Better days are in store for Judea. Jerusalem is still trodden "down of the Gentiles;" but "the times of the Gentiles" shall at length "be fulfilled;" and then shall the old wastes be built, and the desolations of many generations be repaired; then shall God "create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."

* *Lands of the Bible*, vol. ii. page 443.

CHAPTER VII.

Preparations for a visit to the Dead Sea and the Jordan—Engage a military escort—Leave Jerusalem by the Jaffa gate in the afternoon—Descend the valley of the Kedron—Its present state compared with Ezekiel's vision—An incident in the life of David illustrated—Arabs watering their flocks at sunset—Is this fountain the En-shemeah of Scripture?—The Arab tents in the valley—Arrive by moonlight at the convent of Mar-Saba—Rugged grandeur of the surrounding scenery—Pitch our tents in a deep ravine beneath the convent walls—Visit the convent in the morning—Its history—Its fortress-like size and strength—The useless life of its monks—Cross the Wilderness of Judah—Incidents on the way—Sterility of that dreary region—Approach the plain of the Jordan—Its appearance as seen by Lot—The contrast now—The Dead Sea and the desolation that reigns around it—The fords of the Jordan—The great events associated with that river—Jericho—The fountains of Elisha, &c.

HAVING resolved on making an excursion to the Dead Sea, two of our number had an interview with Mr. Finn, the British consul, upon the subject. The Arabs of the Jordan valley have the reputation of being troublesome to travellers; and it is not considered wise or safe to approach that lawless region without some suitable protection. Until very recently the protection, such as it was, used to be of a kind that strikingly illustrated the weakness of the Turkish government. The protection was granted, not by the Pasha of Jerusalem, but by certain allies or representatives of the Jordan Arabs themselves. On payment of a sum of money to these agents of the chiefs, whose tribes hover about the north-eastern boundary of the Dead Sea, a sort of passport was granted, in virtue of which, if the travellers possessing it should be robbed notwithstanding, the chiefs, whose faith it pledged, were bound to enforce restitution. The pay-

ment, in plain terms, was a sort of black-mail, in respect of which the Rob Roys of the Jordan undertook to come between the traveller and the risks of his journey.

It would appear, however, that the Turkish authorities had at last become ashamed of a system which so openly proclaimed their impotence; and had given notice to the European consuls in the Holy City that to the Turkish governor alone all applications for protection must now be made. Mr. Finn seemed to doubt whether travellers were as secure under the new arrangement as under the old one. The safe-conduct issued in the name of the Arab chiefs was seldom violated. The escort of Turkish soldiers now put in its place, he feared, would prove a less efficient guarantee. If danger should arise—if an attack should be made—he seemed much to apprehend that the valiant military guard would be the first to flee. There was now, however, no alternative; and the consul's *cavass* was accordingly despatched to the governor to make known our purpose of visiting the Dead Sea, and to request that the necessary escort should be directed to follow us to the convent of Mar-Saba, on the edge of the wilderness of Judah, where we designed to pass the night. It is hardly needful to say, that for this protection we had to pay. The transaction, in short, amounted to the simple hiring of three Turkish soldiers, at the rate of about four shillings each per day. Besides settling for us this piece of business, the consul kindly procured for us a letter from the patriarch of the Greek church at Jerusalem to the superior of the convent of Mar-Saba, in order to obtain for us such civilities as the monks of the establishment might find themselves in circumstances to offer.

These preliminaries arranged, preparations were immediately made for setting forth on this exciting expedition. The horses previously engaged for ourselves and our baggage, were mustered in the narrow lane at the door of our hotel. We were about to make our first experiment in tent life, and many things had to be thought of and provided for, about which travellers in this part of the world have no occasion to concern themselves. At

last everything was complete, and in single file—an order of march indispensable in the narrow streets, or rather lanes and alleys of Jerusalem—we took our course towards the Jaffa gate. Three ladies, and the like number of gentlemen, formed our party. It was about half-past four o'clock in the afternoon when we left the city. Descending the steep path into the lower part of the valley of Gihon, and skirting along the base of Mount Zion, we passed down the narrow defile of the gloomy valley of Hinnom, at the lower end of which we emerged into the valley of the Kedron. For about three miles our course lay along the bed of this interesting valley, in riding down which we many times turned round to look back on the venerable heights of Moriah and Mount Zion. Although the valley for a considerable distance seems as if, at least, “the scent of the waters” of Siloam continued to reach it, causing it to exhibit a corresponding verdure and fruitfulness, these waters are far too feeble to form a running stream. The bed of the Kedron was altogether dry. Ezekiel's vision, in its literal sense, is at present but very partially realized. The waters that issue from the sanctuary fail long, long before they have approached the wilderness, or penetrated to the Dead Sea. But not the less truly and faithfully on that account do they reflect the very likeness of that state of things which the imagery of the prophet was meant to describe. The waters of life, the gospel of salvation, has also, as yet, come far short of its full and final triumph. It has, indeed, abundantly proved its divine efficacy wherever it has appeared; but, alas! there has not been faith enough in the church to keep it steadily flowing on. As yet, the vast spiritual wildernesses of Asia and Africa have been hardly touched by its quickening stream; and the Dead Sea of their foul idolatries and corruptions remains to be healed.

After about an hour's riding we left the valley of the Kedron, and began to slant up the steep hills that overhang its eastern side. Below the point at which we turned out of it, the valley becomes a mere cleft or gorge between bare, lofty, and precipi-



tous rocks. As we rode along the face of the hill, incessantly and often rapidly ascending as we proceeded, we could look down on the yawning chasm beneath, and far away across it into a wild mountainous country, where vegetation, save in the ravines and hollows, seemed scarcely to exist.

Here, too, we had an opportunity of witnessing, more than once, incidents of a kind that forcibly reminded us of scenes in the Scripture history of David, by which readers, ignorant of the country in which they happened, may have been often not a little perplexed. When David was hiding in the wilderness of Ziph, an opportunity presented itself of slaying King Saul as he lay asleep in the night, unconscious of any danger being near. Too generous to avail himself of the advantage that had come so unexpectedly and so temptingly in his way, David, nevertheless, resolved to show how completely his persecutor had been in his power. Stealing noiselessly into Saul's camp, accompanied by a single follower, and passing unobserved through the midst of the drowsy guards, David "took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep" (1 Sam. xxvi. 12). Having performed this daring exploit, he and his attendant, Abishai, "went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off, a great space being between them." Having got to this safe distance from his relentless enemy, David is represented in the sacred history as proceeding to address Abner, the leader of Saul's host, and to taunt him with his unsoldier-like want of vigilance in leaving his royal master exposed to the hazard of being slain in the very midst of his own camp.

What is apt to appear strange in this narrative is the fact, that these hostile parties should have been near enough to carry on the conversation which the narrative describes, and yet that all the while the one should have been entirely beyond the reach of the other. That all this, however, was both possible and easy, was verified in our presence. As we were riding cau-

tiously along the face of the hill, our attention was suddenly arrested by the voice of a shepherd, who was evidently calling to some one whom we could not see, but whose answer we distinctly heard. The dialogue went on. Another and another sentence was slowly and sonorously uttered by the shepherd near us, and as often the response was distinctly given. At length, guided by the sound, we descried, far up the confronting hill, the source of the second voice in the person of another shepherd; and learned from our Arab attendants that they were talking to each other about their flocks. Between these two men was the deep crevasse formed by the valley of the Kedron, walled in by lofty precipices, which no human foot could scale. It would probably have taken a full hour for one, even as fleet and as strong-winded as an Asahel, to pass from the standing-place of the one speaker to that of the other; and yet they were exchanging words with perfect ease. The mystery of the dramatic scene in the wilderness of Ziph was at an end; and we were reminded at the same time of an important truth, that in dealing with the sacred Scriptures, ignorance often makes difficulties which a larger knowledge and a deeper intelligence would at once remove. As we moved along the hill-face, dialogues of the same kind once and again attracted our notice, showing plainly that these trans-valline colloquies are of common occurrence. The facility of hearing was no doubt increased by the extreme stillness of the air, and by the voice being at once confined and thrown back by the steep sides of the hills.

It is difficult for those who have not travelled through these mountains to realize the feeling of utter loneliness which they produce. Even in the remotest and least frequented districts of our own Scottish Highlands, there is usually some human habitation to be seen. As the evening is closing in, the eye catches the blue smoke curling up from the bottom of the glen, where the solitary farm-house is nestling in some grassy sheltered nook, with its little clump of trees around it; or the distant bark of the shepherd's dog betrays the lonely "shielsing" from

which the sound proceeds, far up the mountain side. In the highest and most inaccessible of the Alpine valleys—on the verge of the glaciers that give birth to the Ticino, the Aar, or the Rhone, the rustic wooden *châlet*, hanging on the edge of its plat of verdure on the very brow of some stupendous precipice, tells the adventurous traveller that he is still among the abodes of living men. Not so among these mountains of Judah. Wide as was the range of view which they often afforded us as we rode along, no trace of a human dwelling, even in the remotest distance, could be descried.

In no part, indeed, of Syria, is such a thing as a separate habitation to be seen; the country is too insecure, the people too lawless, for any man to venture to dwell alone. When we see our own cottages and country-houses scattered, one here and another there, over the face of the land as taste or convenience may dictate, without a thought on the part of their occupants of seeking or requiring protection from any one, it seldom occurs to us to consider what a testimony this state of things bears as to the moral and social condition of our people. We forget oftentimes to recognize in that simple and familiar fact, a conclusive proof of the predominance, in our highly-favoured country, of law and order, and mutual confidence. It is the total absence of these safeguards of society that compels the inhabitants of Syria to cluster together, each little tribe grouped into their own village, usually perched on some hill top, or other elevated position, from which they can keep a good look out on the country round. When they leave their village in the morning to lead out their flocks to the distant pastures, or to cultivate their little patches of lentils, or millet, or barley, every man is armed. As night comes on, the flocks are all brought back to the village again; the shepherd, with his long gun over his shoulder, going before them, and uttering, from time to time, especially when any of his sheep or goats are threatening to stray or linger behind, a peculiar cry, which is said to have come down from the remotest ages of pastoral life. The sight which, in our

journeys through the land, we had often occasion to witness, never failed forcibly to remind us of our Saviour's beautiful description of the shepherd—"When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John x. 4, 5).

In the mountain district we were at this time traversing, however, there was not even a village to be seen. A few shepherds we did meet with, but no vestige of any human dwelling-place. Far as the eye could range, the country seemed to be a perfect solitude, the hills rocky and bare, without a tree or bush to cover their naked sides. We were now, in fact, on the verge of that vast region, stretching away southwards to Arabia, and eastwards across the Jordan into the land of the ancient Moabites and Ammonites, where tent life still reigns unbroken as in the ancient patriarchal ages. The path we were pursuing led us gradually over the hill, along the western face of which we had been previously proceeding, and brought us down on the farther side of it into the valley of the Kedron, or Wady-en-Nar, as the natives call it, again. By crossing the hill we had cut off a considerable angle which the valley makes in rounding it; and had, at the same time, escaped the difficulties we must have encountered had we held on by the valley, from the extreme ruggedness of its bed in the narrow gorge through which it runs for a considerable part of the way. The Kedron valley, after running thus far in a direction nearly due south from Jerusalem, now bends away to the south-east, and continues this course till it reaches the Dead Sea.

At a short distance below the point where we re-entered the valley, we found ourselves opposite to a fine well or fountain, at which the Arabs were watering their flocks. Some were raising the water from the well, and others pouring it into the adjacent troughs, while others still were leading forward the sheep and the goats to drink. There was something very pleasing

about the whole scene. It had about it the antique savour of old pastoral life. The sun had just set, but the western sky was still glowing with his parting rays, and the hill tops were all on fire with his roseate hues. The firmament overhead was cloudless and clear, and the crescent moon was already distinctly visible, kindling up that gentler light that was to guide us on the remainder of our way. We crossed the dry bed of the Kedron, and approached the fountain to enjoy a nearer view of this truly Oriental picture. The bleating of the flocks, the barking of the dogs, the merry laugh of the children frolicking around, the women filling their pitchers at the well and bearing them away on their heads to the tents of the tribe about a mile farther down the valley, carried one's thoughts away back to that Scripture scene, so full of simplicity and beauty, where the servant of Abraham made his camels to kneel down "by a well of water at the time of the evening, even at the time that women go out to draw water;" and where he prayed the Lord to speed his errand in finding a wife for his master's son.

Some have thought that this fountain may be the En-shemesh specified in the book of Joshua (Josh. xv. 7) as one of the marks of the north border of the tribe of Judah. Others, however, think they have found the En-shemesh of Judah's north border on the way from Jericho to Jerusalem, at a short distance to the east of Bethany. Between these two opinions, in the present imperfect state of our knowledge of the ancient localities involved in the question, it is not easy to decide. Scripture describes the northern boundary of Judah as running from the plain of the Jordan—from a point at a little distance beyond the upper end of the Dead Sea—away westwards through the hill-country "towards the waters of En-shemesh." And it is added, "the goings out thereof were at En-rogel." The line by the fountain east of Bethany is, no doubt, the more direct course of the two, from the point specified in the Jordan valley to En-rogel. Probably, however, the straightness of the line had little to do with the settlement of these ancient boundaries. The

territories of the tribes of Israel were not laid out in parallelograms like the United States of North America. It was not meridians of longitude or parallels of latitude that ruled, with scientific accuracy, the limits of the tribal territories. A range of hills, a water-course, or deep valley, however winding and tortuous the line it described—these land-marks of nature's own making were, no doubt, what Joshua chiefly looked to in dividing the land. Tried by this principle, I am disposed to think the balance of probability is in favour of the fountain at which we had arrived as being the true En-shemesh. The other line has no natural "going out at En-rogel," while this line undoubtedly has. The other line could be made to reach En-rogel only by an artificial and arbitrary course, running across the hills which form the eastern wall of the Kedron valley, and dipping down into that valley opposite En-rogel. This line, by falling into the valley of the Kedron lower down at the fountain we visited, would not only have a natural hollow by which to enter it, but its "goings out" from this point would naturally and literally be at En-rogel. It would simply run up the deep valley or ravine of the Kedron—itself the best boundary-line that could be desired—till it reached the well of En-rogel, the point at which the boundary is described as taking a new direction, and turning off westwards through the lateral valley "of the son of Hinnom."

The Arabs who possess the valley we were now descending, and the country around it, belong to the tribe of the Subeih, who seem to be in the intermediate stage between the *Fellahin*, who have settled down in villages, and the wild *Bedouin*, who still cleave to their primitive nomadic life. The Subeih have no houses; they dwell in tents, but they do not migrate. Their little encampment has long been stationary in a bend of the valley, beneath the shelter of an overhanging wall of rock, and at the base of a steep and lofty hill. The bed of the water-course, perfectly dry, save when temporarily filled by the winter torrents, runs alongside of their tents. We passed them in the

dusk of the evening. The season of Ramadân had begun—the Lent of Mohammedanism—during which the followers of that creed fast every day, from two hours before sunrise till the sun has set. The Subeih, in consequence, were all occupied with their evening meal. Fires were burning cheerily in almost every tent, and the women were busy baking fresh bread, and boiling their not unsavoury messes of milk and Indian corn. The tents were chiefly made of camel's hair, black and dingy, and greatly the worse of wear. The women and children, and a few of the men, came out to look at us as we passed, and all courteously returned our salutations. Their dress and appearance, and the aspect of their tents, seemed all to indicate a somewhat unprosperous condition. In winter their life must be wretched enough. Poor people! when shall Christianity reach them, to enrich them with its countless temporal benefits, and to elevate them with its exalted and eternal hopes?

Our route continued along the winding bed of the deserted water-course—now on one side of it, now on the other—the night and the hills shutting in, at every step, closer and closer around us. The last remnants of the lingering twilight had disappeared, and we had nothing but the stars and a slender moon, not quite four days old, to guide us, when at length our mukharis struck away up a steep ascent on the right, or south side, of the valley. As we cautiously followed them we found ourselves gradually rising till we came out on the very brink of a tremendous chasm, going sheer down in a precipice of 400 feet. Feeble as the moon's light was, we could distinctly see the gigantic wall of rock, springing up to a still greater height on the farther side of this frightful abyss. A low dry-stone wall, in most places only a foot or two in height, was the only defence between us and the gulf below. Above us towered the hill along the face of which the path led us. Beneath us all was shrouded in darkness; for the moonlight was not strong enough to light the chasm more than half-way down. It is impossible to conceive a grander or more exciting scene. The utter loneli-

ness of the place—the savage wildness of the scenery—the pale doubtful light—the glorious starry sky roofing in the narrow defile—the consciousness of being in the wilderness of Judah—the perilous-looking path, buried in deep shadow, along which we were moving, combined altogether to produce a state of feeling which it is difficult to describe. Both the suddenness with which we had come upon it, and the air of mystery and awfulness which the imperfect light served to throw around it, helped to set fancy on fire, and to kindle it into a glow seldom experienced in our own dull, prosaic, matter-of-fact western world. Nor was the enjoyment the less that it was not unmingled with some slight sense of danger. A false step of one's horse, on the narrow rocky and somewhat slippery path, might send the rider headlong into the dark depths beneath. Or if the wild Arabs of the wilderness were to make an attack, where could they do so in a position that would find us more helpless than here!

After about half an hour's slow and cautious riding along the edge of this yawning abyss, a shout from the foremost of our attendants made us aware that we had reached Mar-Saba. At first we had some difficulty in distinguishing the solid square "keep" of the huge fortress-like edifice from the masses of rock around it. This keep, a lofty tower overlooking the main entrance into the convent, is planted upon a plateau of projecting rock. From this level, the convent stretches down by a succession of gigantic landing-places or shelves, very nearly to the bottom of the ravine, each shelf of rock forming a separate court of the convent, and leading down to another and still lower court beneath it, the whole being surrounded on every side by walls of enormous thickness, and of fifty or sixty feet in height. The edifice, altogether, is of vast size and strength, and looks much liker a huge baronial castle than a so-called religious house. Its site has been skilfully chosen, in a strategic point of view. The projecting ridge of rock on which it is built is a natural spur or buttress running down from the hill above, into the deep chasm below. This projecting ridge has the great gulf



of the Kedron valley on the one side and in front, while on the other side it is defended by a narrow cleft that cuts deep into the face of the hill. On three sides, therefore, it is all but unapproachable. Only at the upper end, where the rock on which it stands joins on to the hill above, could any enemy, unprovided with artillery, assail it. It is said to be one of the oldest conventual establishments in the world, dating as it does from the fifth century of the Christian era.

Our concern at present, however, was not to inquire into its past history, but to ascertain whether we were to be admitted within its walls. Having rung the bell as soon as we reached the gate, a small basket was lowered from a solitary loop-hole about fifty feet above the level of the ground. Our letter from the Greek patriarch to the superior of the convent having been immediately placed in the basket, it was hoisted up again. While waiting for the answer we passed round to the farther side of the building, and descended, by a series of steep zig-zag paths between the convent wall and the edge of the smaller cleft or ravine, to a little level space opposite the more private entrance. The entrance here was by a low massive iron door, which was at length opened by one of the monks. On hearing that there were ladies in our party, he at once informed us that admission into the convent for any of their sex was impossible. "Will you be so barbarous," said our interpreter, "as to shut your door in the face of ladies, and to compel them to pass the night in this savage wilderness upon the hill side?" "If it were the king's daughter who had come to the door," answered the friar, "she could not be permitted to enter here."

It was the rule of the house, and we of course had nothing to say. The consul at Jerusalem had, in fact, prepared us for such a reception; but we wished to put the fathers to the proof, and to hear how they would meet the application. There was no help for it. We must bivouac outside, and we accordingly set to work immediately to pitch our tents. This proved to be a somewhat difficult task. The little level space on which our

tents and baggage had been laid down was paved with stones, and to drive tent pins into it was out of the question. Fortunately, there were loose stones in abundance lying about; and by placing some of the largest of these alongside of the tents, and twisting the tent ropes round them, we contrived at last to get the tents to stand.

The old monk brought us a plentiful supply of excellent water, and some wine; but nothing was half so refreshing as the good tea we had brought along with us, and which we contrived, with the help of our spirit lamps, to prepare for ourselves. Our modest meal being ended, we groped our way up to a ledge of rock overhanging the narrow lateral ravine, on the brink of which we were encamped, and which protects this side of the convent. It was now nine o'clock. The moon had set. The shadows of the mountains were all around us. The massive towers and battlements of the convent rose immediately above us; their picturesque outline projected against the bright starry sky that overarched the deep dell in which we sat. Beneath us our white tents glimmered like ghosts through the darkness at the base of the convent wall. Amid the solemn stillness of this singularly striking scene we raised our evening song of praise to Him who lighted up that glorious firmament, and set fast these everlasting hills. Never, perhaps, before did these words seem so full of meaning, or stir up within any of us so strong and deep a tide of feeling, as when they were rung out that night full, and clear, to one of our old martyr melodies, amid the savage precipices of Mar-Saba—

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid.
My safety cometh from the Lord,
Who heaven and earth hath made.

"Thy feet he'll not let slide, nor will
He slumber that thee keeps.
Behold, He that keeps Israel,
He slumbers not, nor sleeps.

"The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade.
On thy right hand doth stay:
The moon by night thee shall not smite,
Nor yet the sun by day.

"The Lord shall keep thy soul; He shall
Preserve thee from all ill.
Henceforth thy going out and in
God keep for ever will."

Our vespers concluded, we at length withdrew to our tents. Rest was much needed, but it was not easy "to steep the senses in forgetfulness" after so exciting a day, and in circumstances so novel to us all. About midnight we were startled for a moment by the rapid tread of horses' feet, and by the clash of arms. It was the military escort that had followed us from Jerusalem. They came dashing down into the ravine, picketed their horses in an angle of the convent wall, flung down their swords and spears on the stony pavement beside our tents, and wrapping themselves up in their cloaks, were soon fast asleep, and all was silent as before.

Next morning we were astir by break of day. So soon as we had breakfasted, and got our baggage and tent equipage packed up, we sent off our mukharis along with it, in advance. Although all themselves armed, one of the three Turkish soldiers was directed to accompany them as an additional protection. Meanwhile the male portion of our party proceeded to visit the convent, and were very courteously shown over it all. There was not much of any great interest to be seen. There were tawdry chapels and tombs of saints; and conspicuous among these, that of Mar-Saba himself—that is Saint Saba, the alleged founder of the convent. There were many saints' pictures and saints' skulls, in short, a multitude of dead things; but nothing, apparently, that had any life in it, excepting some very sweet flowers, and one or two graceful palm-trees in the little convent garden. As for the poor monks themselves, they seemed so inanimate as to be little better than dead things too. Their chief em-

ployment, in addition to the ordinary mechanical routine of their conventual life, appeared to consist in dressing up and offering for sale, walking-sticks from the banks of the Jordan, and little curiosities from the Dead Sea.

From the walls and terraces of the convent, overhanging the deep gorge of the Kedron, and having now the advantage of the bright morning sun, we could better understand, than was possible the night before, the peculiarities of this singular place. The hills seem to have been rent asunder by some volcanic force. The regular courses of the reddish-yellow limestone strata piled up one above another, give to the stupendous precipices that form the sides of the crevasse, the aspect of such gigantic masonry as the Titans might have reared when they warred with the gods. These precipices are full of caves, many of them far up the face of the cliffs. In these caves, it is said, that the Essenes—a Jewish sect that may be regarded as the founders of asceticism in religion—were many of them wont to live previous to, and about the commencement of the Christian era. If Pliny be correct in placing the head-quarters of the Essenes among the rocks of En-gedi (Ain-Jiddy), not more than twelve or fourteen miles south-east of Mar-Saba, the probability is all the greater that some of them may have dwelt here.

Nor is it all unlikely, that the fact of those caves having been so used by the ascetics of Judaism, may have served, when monkery came into vogue, to attract the ascetics of Christianity. One particular cave the monks of the convent were most careful to point out, as that in which Saint Saba himself had lived for eight whole years, in company with a lion! This it seems was in the fifth century, and ever since, the monks of Mar-Saba have had a footing in this wilderness. There are about thirty of them in the convent now, and they are understood to have been much more numerous in former times. They have been here for thirteen or fourteen hundred years; and what has this monkish institution achieved? Nothing—absolutely nothing. Their convent stands in the valley of the Kedron, mid-

way between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. But no water of life has ever flowed forth from it to make the wilderness and the solitary places around it glad, or to cause the desert to rejoice and to blossom as the rose.

About seven o'clock we mounted our horses at the convent gate, and bade farewell to Mar-Saba. We were well pleased to have had an opportunity of inspecting it, and the rugged scenery around it, in the broad light of day; though it was impossible not to feel that it had impaired a little the strength and awfulness of those impressions which the previous night had produced. The air of mystery which the shadows of night had thrown around it was dissolved, almost distastefully, by the clear, unmistakeable, literal distinctness with which we could now see up to the very summit of every beetling crag, and down to the bottom of every yawning ravine. That glaring sun that had come up over these mountains of Moab "like a strong man rejoicing to run a race," had already sent such a flood of light through every cleft and cranny of these shattered and dislocated rocks, as to have tamed down their wildness, and stripped them of not a little of that peculiar fascination which a night view produced. The change recalled to mind the suggestive lines of Walter Scott, in reference to one of the ancient haunts of monkery in Scotland—

"If you would see fair Melrose aright,
Go, visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild but to flout the ruins gray."

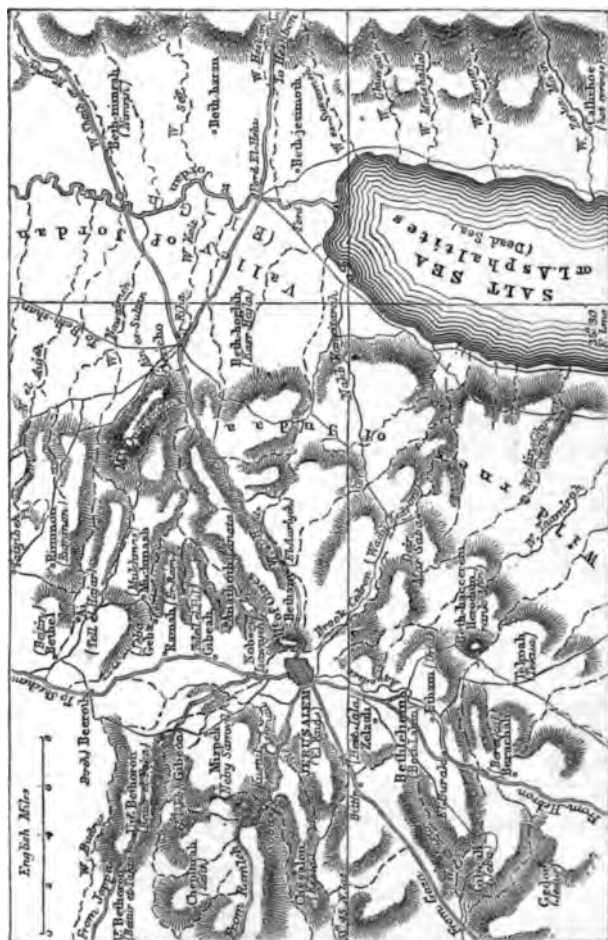
In proceeding from Mar-Saba to the Dead Sea, we had to go back for about a mile and a half by the way we had come the night before. We could not otherwise get across the deep and rugged ravine of the Kedron. Returning, therefore, along the brow of the precipice, on the right or southern side of the ravine, till we had reached the upper end of the gorge of Mar-Saba, where the valley becomes more open, we rode down towards the

dry bed of the water-course. As we were doing so one of the troopers of our escort, taking a shorter cut, his horse's feet slipped, and down went horse and man, head over heels, to the bottom of the valley, his long tufted spear rolling before him. Strange to say, neither man nor horse seemed to sustain any damage. By the time we had reached the spot, the fellow was already remounted, and spurring his Arab steed up the opposite bank as if nothing had happened.

At this stage of our progress it occurred to us to remark that instead of two armed attendants we had four in our company. We had engaged but three; and one of these was in advance of us with the mukharis and the baggage. Evidently, therefore, we had two more than we had bargained for, and we pulled up to ask an explanation. The extra men proved to be volunteers—Arabs of some neighbouring tribe, who, hearing of a party of travellers at Mar-Saba, had come to proffer their services. Knowing nothing of them, we declined their aid, and sent them away.

Our two remaining soldiers, from the garrison at Jerusalem, were now our only guards and guides. What might be their efficiency as guards we had, happily, no occasion to put to the test, but as guides they were worse than useless. The path we were now pursuing very soon became so indistinct that it was impossible for an unpractised eye to trace it. The hill sides we were climbing were bare and hard. Any scanty vegetation they bore was already all but scorched and withered. Every here and there half-a-dozen different tracks presented themselves, any one of which seemed just as likely to be the right one as any other. Meanwhile the leading soldier pushed on, keeping well a-head, and conducting us incessantly higher and higher up among the hills, till at length every vestige of a path disappeared, and we found ourselves getting upon ground so rough and broken, and among rocks and gulleys so steep and impracticable, that we were brought fairly to a stand. Fortunately we had now gained an elevation from which we could see far and wide around us. Above all, we had now full in view the

COUNTRY BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND THE DEAD SEA.



Dead Sea itself, and were able, therefore, ourselves to form some idea of the course we ought to take. It was plain our guide had lost his way, and was leading us altogether wrong. Although he still pointed forward with his spear, and shouted to us to follow him, and continued riding on, we refused to advance, and having recourse to our maps, struck out a course of our own. Keeping our eye upon the Dead Sea, we rode along among the mountain tops, in an easterly direction, for upwards of half an hour, and at length, to our great joy, as we came to the brow of a steep descent, we caught sight of our baggage horses, far down beneath us, winding along the base of the hill.

Set at ease by this discovery, we were now better able to enjoy the singular and striking prospect that lay stretched out before us. It was the wilderness of Judah—the very picture of sterility and desolation. The whole face of the country was of a whitish-yellow colour, the pervading hue of the calcareous rock of which it is composed. It is a great elevated table-land, swelling up here and there into naked and rugged heights, many of them of fantastic forms, and especially along the margin of the Dead Sea. That sea itself, seen at intervals through the openings in the chain of hills that overhangs its western shore, was sometimes broken, to our view, into three or four separate lakes—all gleaming bright in the glorious sunshine, and imparting that peculiar charm to the landscape which water never fails to supply. It was across the very same country, and in a line not many miles south of where we stood, that Abraham looked towards the plain which that sea now fills, on the occasion to which the sacred narrative refers—"And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (Gen. xix. 27, 28). The avenging fires, and the smoke that issued from them on that eventful day, have long been quenched, but only by the sullen waters of that

mysterious sea, in whose depths the cities of the plain have been buried for ever.

But we must hasten on to overtake the mukharis, on whom alone we are now disposed to rely for guidance through this dreary wilderness. It was evident that our headstrong soldier had caught sight of them too, and had thereby been convinced of his mistake; for we at length discovered him about two miles off, and far up the mountain side, making the best of his way down to rejoin us. On descending from the lofty heights among which we had been wandering, we came out at length upon a sort of plain, of many miles in extent, burned up and bare, and in passing over which the heat was intolerable. There was not a tree, or shrub, or bush, or flower of any kind to be seen. In the distance yellow, rocky hill-sides glared in the sun, and beneath our feet we had the same material, disintegrated into burning dust. The scanty vegetation the soil had borne earlier in the spring, was already all but entirely gone. It was into such a wilderness as this, if not the same, that Jesus was "led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil." Never, certainly, before did I so vividly realize the exhaustion by which our Lord's humanity must needs have been oppressed and all but overborne, when the great adversary came forth to assail Him. Looking around on the utter barrenness of the scene—a scene that mocked the very idea of finding in it any means of human sustenance—one could not but feel as if there must have been at least as much of the scornful malignity as of the deceitful subtlety of the arch-fiend in these well-known words: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." If He was to find bread there, truly the stones must be His food.

Along the eastern verge of this parched and dreary region, the hills swell up to a considerable height, forming that picturesque and stately range which drops down, on the farther side, in a bold, precipitous front of from 1200 to 1500 feet in depth, upon the shores of the Dead Sea. In passing down through these hills the path, as we left the elevated and barren plain

above, led us at first into a gentle hollow, the beginning of a mountain water-course. This hollow, before we had advanced into it 100 yards, had become a deep cleft, with nothing but tall, naked rocks on either hand. Onward and downward it led us, at every turn of its tortuous course, the scenery becoming wilder and more grand. Gigantic precipices rose around us. Save here and there, along the dry bed of the water-course, no trace of vegetable life was to be seen. The bare and burning rocks seemed all but calcined by the scorching heat of the sun. Many of them were of the strangest shapes, as if they had been rent and shattered by some portentous convulsion of nature, when the great gulf of the Jordan valley, to which we were approaching, was originally formed. It was the gorge of Mar-Saba over again, but on a much larger scale—the very beau-ideal of savage wildness and stern desolation.

At length, after nearly an hour's riding through this awe-inspiring scenery, the defile we had been descending, known by the name of the Nakb-Kaneitarah suddenly opened out; and what a sight it was that then burst upon our view! At our feet, and stretching away to the left, between the hills of Judah and the confronting range of Gilead, lay the plain of the Jordan, eight or ten miles in breadth, desolate and bare throughout as the rocks above and around us. Far across this plain, and near its farther or eastern side, a narrow winding belt of bright green foliage running down through it, marked unmistakeably the course of the river Jordan. Directly in front of us the broad, brimming waters of the Dead Sea bounded the plain upon the south, filling up, for nearly fifty miles southward from this point, the entire space from the base of the precipitous wall of the mountains of Judah on the one side, to the base of the equally precipitous wall of the mountains of Moab on the other.

It is impossible to take even a first look at this scene, without being struck with the signal change it must have undergone since the day when Lot viewed it with so covetous an eye, and resolved to make it his abode. The spot on the brow of the

hills to the east of Bethel, from which he then surveyed it, could not have been more than ten or twelve miles north of the place where we now stood. His elevation was much greater than ours, and must have enabled him to see southwards along the valley of the Jordan, far beyond the point where the plain is now terminated by the waters of the Dead Sea. The words in which Scripture records that memorable incident in Lot's history are these: "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan. . . . And Lot dwelt in (among) the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen. xiii. 10-12). It is utterly impossible to reconcile that description with the present condition of this valley. What any one, standing where Lot stood, and looking where he looked, would see now is—*first*, a great plain all but utterly barren and waste; the Jordan, indeed, running through it, but in a bed sunk so far below the level of the plain, as to be totally unserviceable for the purpose of irrigation. *Next*, and beyond this sterile plain, he would see the entire valley of the Jordan covered from side to side by a vast volume of waters, stretching onwards for nearly fifty miles, waters of which neither man nor beast can drink, and in which not even a fish can live—waters that wash the mountains of Moab on the one side, and those of Judah on the other, leaving not even a pathway by which the traveller may tread their shores. How unlike, how opposite, this to a land "like Egypt," the granary of the nations; or to a land "like the garden of the Lord," like Eden itself, the very perfection of fertility and beauty!

That a lake, and probably a large one, then occupied some considerable portion of the space now covered by the Dead Sea, seems all but certain. At one time, indeed, the notion was entertained that the Jordan ran, originally, right on through this valley, and along the great Wady-Arabah beyond it, till it fell,

at the head of the Gulf of Akaba, into the Red Sea. Had this been possible, the necessity for the existence of a great lake to receive and evaporate the waters of the Jordan would, no doubt, have been done away. Recent surveys, however, of the course of the Wady-Arabah—a continuous hollow extending from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akaba—seem to have established the stumbling fact that this wady rises at a certain point, as it proceeds southwards, to the height of 800 feet above the level of the Red Sea. When to this one fact is added another, now also well ascertained, that the Dead Sea itself is 1300 feet lower than the level of the Red Sea; when it turns out, in other words, that in passing from the lower end of the Jordan valley to Akaba, there is an elevation to be crossed of upwards of 2000 feet—the idea of finding any way of escape in that direction for the waters of the Jordan, must be obviously and entirely abandoned. At some period of unknown remoteness such may have been its course, but it must have been before the great crevasse of the Jordan valley itself was formed. Lynch, the surveyor of the Jordan, is of opinion, with many others, that that river “originally ran through the vale of Siddim before the latter was submerged.” In the preface to the new edition of the narrative of his survey, he briefly states, in the following passage, the grounds on which he rests this conclusion :—

“From the pits of bitumen, within sight of the highest perennial source of the Jordan, to the salt mountain of Usdum, at the south-west extremity of the Dead Sea, there is a continued chain of volcanic characters. Black basalt prevails from beyond the head of Lake Tiberias, far down the Jordan; and the north-eastern and north-western shores of the Dead Sea present, respectively, tufa and a black, bituminous limestone, which inflames and is fetid when exposed to the fire; while sulphur and naphtha are also found upon its shores. Thermal springs prevail upon the shores of the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan, and the Dead Sea. The whole region has been convulsed by

earthquakes, and the one which in 1837 nearly destroyed the towns of Safed and Tiberias, dislodged a huge mass of bitumen from the depths of the last-named sea. South of the Dead Sea volcanic characters are also exhibited. Burckhardt saw volcanic rocks on the *eastern* base of Mount Sinai, and the traces are those of primary volcanic action. Our soundings ascertained the bottom of the Dead Sea to consist of two plains, an elevated and a depressed one, averaging, the former thirteen, and the latter 1300 feet below the surface. Through the northern, and largest and deepest one, is a ravine which seems to correspond with the bed of the Jordan to the north, and the Wady-el-Jeib, or ravine within a ravine, at the south end of the sea. Between the river Jabok (a tributary of the Jordan) and the Dead Sea, we unexpectedly encountered a sudden break-down in the bed of the last-named river; and according to a distinguished eastern traveller, there is a similar break in the water-courses to the south of the sea. As stated in the narrative, too, the conviction was forced upon me, that the mountains which hem in the Dead Sea are older than the sea itself; for had their relative ages been the same at first, the torrents which pour into the sea would have worn their beds in a gradual and correlative shape; whereas in the northern section, where a soft, bituminous limestone prevails, they plunge down several hundred feet; while on both sides of the southern portion the ravines come down without abruptness, although the head of Wady-Kerak, at the south-east border of the sea, is more than 1000 feet higher than Wady-Ghuweir on its north-west shore. Lake Tiberias is 312 feet, the Dead Sea 1316 feet, and the Red Sea, computed by Laborde, seventy-five feet below the level of the Mediterranean. *As an elevation of the whole Ghor, preserving these exact proportions, would carry its waters into the southern ocean, I cannot resist the inference that, by a general convulsion, the whole valley has sunk down, with the greatest depression abreast of Wady-Ghuweir, and that the streams which formerly ran through to the Red Sea were thereby debarred an outlet, and submerged*

the plain, the cities of which, from the abundance of bitumen that prevailed, were most probably the theatre of the preceding conflagration."

It seems obvious to remark that the reasons thus specified point rather to the causes which produced the depression of the Jordan valley, than to the time at which they operated. It would require a more careful and searching examination of the geological appearances of the whole district in question, than they seem as yet to have received, in order to ascertain how far these would correspond with a theory which dates the depression from the period of the overthrow of the cities of the plain. If there be no inherent contrariety between them, every difficulty would be at an end as regards the account which Scripture gives of the fertility and beauty of the plain of Sodom, when Lot first beheld it. According to Lieutenant Lynch's view of the date of the convulsion, there would then be either no sea at all in the plain of Sodom, or if there was it would be only a fresh-water lake, another sea of Tiberias, lending additional grace and fertility to the country around it. If, on the other hand, the convulsion took place in a much remoter age, it is manifest not only that there must have been a sea, but a salt sea, in the plain of Sodom, long before Lot ever beheld it. Then, as now, upon that supposition, there could be no outlet for the waters of the Jordan. These pent-up waters would, of course, form a lake; and it is now a well-ascertained fact, that all lakes which have no outflow necessarily become salt. This other view of the question has been recently very fully and elaborately stated by Captain William Allen, of the British Navy, in his *Dead Sea: a New Route to India*. After referring to the statements of Burckhardt, Malte-Brun, Milman, and others upon the subject, which are substantially in accordance with those of Lynch, he proceeds to set forth the reasons on which he rests his opinion, that the geological stands quite separate from the historical catastrophe—that the latter was far too *recent* to harmonize with the phenomena of the former. His theory is, that the arm of

the Red Sea which terminates at present at Akaba, penetrated originally all along the Wady-Arabah and the present Jordan valley, onwards and northwards for many miles beyond the present Sea of Tiberias. That afterwards some volcanic disturbance, antecedent to the historic period, had so elevated the Wady-Arabah as to break this long arm of the Red Sea; and that in the deep hollow—the elbow, if one might so speak, of this far-stretching arm—a portion of the ancient briny flood remained and formed the Dead Sea, which continues to this day. It is hardly possible, however, to read Captain Allen's ingenious speculations and arguments on this subject, without feeling that he is in the hands of one who is pleading in favour of a foregone conclusion. The object of his book is to show that the true way to shorten the route to India is to let the sea into the Jordan valley, by cutting a canal from the Bay of Acre across the great plain of Jezreel. And why not, if that really was the sea's ancient bed? It is only restoring to Neptune a part of his own rightful domain. It would bury, it is true, much good land, and leave not a trace of the sacred scenes of our Lord's personal ministry around the shores of the Sea of Galilee. But these things embarrass not Captain Allen. He is more troubled as to how the Mediterranean, even after it got into the Jordan valley, would get over the 800 feet of rise in the Wady-Arabah; and, accordingly, he labours hard to show that the actual rise cannot be nearly so great. He is obliged, too, in making good his theory, to remove the cities of the plain from the site of the Dead Sea altogether, and to carry them far up the Jordan valley to the east of Bethel. Unfortunately, however, there is a circumstance noted in Scripture history, with which this new location of these cities cannot possibly be reconciled. Abraham was at Mamre—that is, Hebron—when the destruction of the cities of the plain occurred. Here, on that eventful day, he “gat up early in the morning, to the place where he stood before the Lord: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up

as the smoke of a furnace" (Gen. xix. 27, 28). Now, as Hebron is exactly opposite, that is, due west of the middle of the Dead Sea, and not more than twelve or fourteen miles distant from it, it is quite easy to understand how, looking across the wilderness of Judah, he should see what the passage describes. The tremendous convulsion in which the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had perished, the volcanic fires which burned them up, and the overflowing waters of the Jordan that were rushing into the abyss into which they and the whole surrounding plain had sunk down, could not fail to produce that very spectacle which Scripture sets before us. But if this catastrophe took place at a distance so far away from Mamre as the country east of Bethel, Abraham could not possibly have seen it at all. The distance would be upwards of thirty miles at the very least, and the intervening country is, besides, so elevated as to have effectually prevented any one from seeing what might be going on beyond it. In the present state of information, it would be mere folly to dogmatize on this interesting subject, but before Captain Allen's view of it can be accepted, arguments must be adduced for it much stronger than his own.

As regards the precise sites of Sodom and Gomorrah nothing is, or perhaps can be, known. A recent French traveller, M. de Saulcy, of a somewhat lively imagination, persuaded himself, and tries to persuade his readers, that he actually saw their ruins: those of Sodom at the south end of the Dead Sea, and those of Gomorrah at a little distance from its north-western shore. With respect to the former notable discovery, a subsequent and thoroughly trustworthy visitor of the place, M. Van de Velde, says—"I have followed M. de Saulcy's track in this place with Bedouins of the same tribe—of the same shech—Bedouins accustomed to rove about in these localities. I had a copy of M. de Saulcy's manuscript map with me. It was therefore impossible for me to pass by unnoticed the ruins he mentioned. With eagerness I sought them. It was impossible to miss them. Nevertheless, I have not seen anything which con-

firmes his assertions; and notwithstanding of all his assurances, I must set down his discoveries of Sodom as the mere work of the imagination."* A contradiction not less explicit, and also from personal observation, is given by the Rev. Dr. Stewart, of Leghorn, as to M. de Saulcy's alleged discovery of Gomorrah.†

My own decided conviction, founded on both what I have read, and what I have seen, is, that the cities of the plain are buried beneath the waters of the Dead Sea, if they were not also first engulfed in the soil on which they stood, amid the lightnings from above, and the volcanic fires from beneath in which they were consumed. When God "overthrew these cities," He also overthrew "all the plain" (Gen. xix. 25). And while the waters of the lake were thus no doubt pervaded, and, so to speak, poisoned by the mass of saline substances which that tremendous convulsion injected into them, they rolled, at the same time, over the whole length and breadth of the sunken plain. Immediately beyond the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, there is a range of hills several hundred feet in height, and six or eight miles in length, and composed entirely of salt. Detached masses of salt are also numerous all round its south-eastern and south-western shores. Lieutenant Lynch, of the American Navy, when employed upon his recent and well-known survey of that region, saw one huge pillar of solid salt, capped with carbonate of lime, about forty feet in height. Evidently, therefore, materials in abundance existed in that neighbourhood which needed only to be cast into the lake, or heaved up into it from beneath, by the convulsion in which the cities of the plain perished, in order to turn it into that intensely salt sea by which they are now covered. It was in all probability through the midst of these pillar-like masses of salt that Lot was hurrying on, when his reluctant wife, lingering and looking back, was turned into such a pillar herself. The length of the Dead Sea, as measured by Lieutenant Lynch, is 40 geographical miles; its

* Van de Velde's *Syria and Palestine*, vol. ii., note on page 115.

† *The Tent and the Khan*, page 183.

general breadth from 9 to $9\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Its general depth is about 1300 feet.

But we must descend from the higher ground from which we have been making this general survey of the scene before us, and get nearer to what Milton calls, with hardly a sufficient recognition of its magnitude, "the asphaltic pool." Having directed the mukharis and one of the soldiers to make the best of their way with the baggage animals up the valley and along the base of the hills of Judah to our camping ground for the night at Jericho, we descended into the plain. From the point where we emerged from the mountain pass, the ground slopes at first rapidly, and then more gently down to the level of the great valley beneath. Along the upper part of these slopes tall juniper bushes were thickly scattered; and by the sides of the numerous water-courses, dry at this season of the year, by which the whole space from the hills to the shores of the lake were deeply furrowed, there were many thickets of the tamarisk. With these exceptions, the soil was entirely destitute of vegetation, and its barrenness became more marked and complete the nearer we came to the level ground. The cause of this barrenness became sufficiently manifest on tasting the soil and finding it perfectly salt. Having repeated the experiment many times, I found its quality everywhere the same for many miles. The curse still rests upon it. It has "been given to salt."

Looking down from the height above, it seemed little more than a mile to the point on the shore near the centre of the plain, where we designed to approach the lake, and yet it cost us a full hour's steady riding to reach it. When within about half a mile of the beach, we came to some pools and streams of brackish water that issues from hot springs, and around which the thickets of the tamarisk were so dense as to form a complete jungle. To our great delight, the song of small birds came ringing out from the heart of these thickets, breaking the otherwise oppressive silence of that dreary place with their cheerful notes. It is now, however, sufficiently known, that the tales that were wont to

be told about poisonous exhalations rising from the Dead Sea, and proving fatal to any living creature that haunted its shores, are altogether groundless. Crows and pigeons are frequently observed flying across it, and aquatic birds are occasionally seen swimming in its waters.

One's first feeling, indeed, on gaining the beach and looking out on the vast expanse of its rippling waves dancing brightly in the sun, and reflecting the glorious blue of the cloudless heavens, is one of surprise at finding so little to distinguish it from any other lake or sea. There can be no doubt, however, that much of the pleasing impression thus produced is due to the fact, that after riding for hours beneath a broiling sky and over a burning soil, the very sight of water affords an enjoyment of the intensest kind. It is necessary only to stand for a little by the side of that sea, and to contemplate the depressing loneliness and desolation that reign around, in order to realize the character that truly belongs to it. Not one solitary skiff sails that sea—not one solitary fish swims in its waters—not one solitary human habitation, far as the eye or telescope can range, can be descried within sight of its shores—no sustenance for either beast or man, neither grass nor grain does the sterile region by which it is encircled yield. And yet this is the very region that was once the paradise of the land. Truly "Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them . . . are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." And yet sterile and dreary as is even this northern end of the lake, the aspect of the country around its southern shore is more repulsive still. It is, therefore, literally "all the plain," from the one extremity to the other, which God has overthrown.

The light wind that was coming up from the south-east, as we stood upon the beach, was a hot scirocco from the Arabian desert. A dim filmy haze seemed to rise from the waters, which quite hindered us from seeing to the opposite end of the lake. The western shore, as far down as Ain-Jiddy, the ancient En-gedi, about twenty miles distant—a region among whose frightful

steeps David so often sought and found refuge from the enmity of Saul—was distinctly visible. The headland of El-Lisan, or the *tongue*, which about ten miles farther down projects far out into the lake from the base of the opposite mountains of Moab, we could not make out. Beyond that headland, the lake is quite shallow, not averaging more than thirteen feet in depth. This shallow portion of the lake, nearly ten miles in length, and of almost equal breadth, is supposed by many intelligent travellers to have been that plain of Siddim “full of slime pits,” where the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah “fled and fell” before the hosts of Chedorlaomer. The bitumen found in such abundance in that end of the lake and around its shores, gives no little countenance to this idea. Jebel-Usdum, a round hill overhanging the southern shore of the sea, forms part of the range of salt-hills already described, and its name is commonly though without proof identified with Sodom. It was entirely beyond our view. It must have been at least forty-seven English miles from where we stood, and was quite lost in the haze.

Having left the ladies for a little under the care of our escort, the rest of the party proceeded to test the much-famed buoyancy of the waters of this singular sea. It was now about noon, and the heat was so intense, that with uncovered feet it was impossible to stand on the burning beach. To rush into the water, if not an enjoyment, was at least a necessity. Few people have the faculty of swimming in the sea without catching an occasional mouthful of the briny flood that bears them. But, however unpalatable ordinary sea-water may be, it is a positively pleasant drink when compared with the water of the sea of Sodom. It is not only salt—intensely salt—but bitter and burning. The sensation it produces is not simply disagreeable, but painful in no ordinary degree. Every mosquito bite, every little excoriation of the skin, feels, when touched by it, as if it had been rubbed with caustic. Nor is the sensation it produces of a momentary kind. It lasts for hours. It needed only this practical acquaintance with the water to help us to

understand how the unfortunate fishes that are occasionally swept by the floods of their own delightful Jordan into this acherontic lake, should uniformly die. Many such fishes are found dead floating in this sea, or lying on the beach, cast out by the waves. No fish has ever been found in it alive. Nor is this fact at all difficult of explanation. Not only is there not enough of air to sustain the life of a fish in the dense waters of the sea, but these waters are so saturated with saline substances as to be little better than brine. In 1000 ounces of the water, there are 268 ounces, or upwards of one-fourth of the entire weight, of mineral salts.

Speaking of the buoyancy of the waters of the Dead Sea, Josephus says, that when the Roman general, Vespasian, "went to see it, he commanded that some who could not swim should have their hands tied behind them and be thrown into the deep, when it so happened that they all swam, as if a wind had forced them upwards."* There is no exaggeration in this statement. In this sea it is much easier to float than to sink. It is difficult to swim, simply because it is all but impossible to keep one's feet, when in the act of swimming, beneath the surface of the water. They rise, in spite of one, into the air. To lie, or roll about upon the water, costs no greater effort than to do the same thing upon an air-bed. Every swimmer knows how much more buoyant the common sea is than a river or a fresh-water lake. To explain, therefore, the far greater buoyancy of the Dead Sea, it is only necessary to mention that the specific gravity of its water is nearly one-fourth more than that of the water of the ocean.

Among the discomforts connected with bathing in the Dead Sea, is the clammy, unctuous feeling which it leaves upon the skin, and the perfect incrustation of salt with which it covers the hair of one's head. But who would not willingly face annoyances far greater than these, to be able to say that he had breasted the waves beneath which Sodom lies buried!

* Josephus, *Wars*, book iv. chap. ix. 4.

Not long after one o'clock we remounted our horses, and prepared to proceed upon our journey. Our bathing-place was about two or three miles distant from the point where the Jordan empties itself into the lake. For a considerable way above this point, the river all but loses itself in a broad bed of gravelly debris, swept down from the upper country by its powerful stream. Much nearer to us than the embouchure of the river, was a long low promontory running about half a mile into the lake. Neither the promontory, however, nor the river's mouth, could tempt us to pay it a visit. There were no discoveries, no objects of interest, to be seen at either the one or the other. The heat was overpowering. We had still a very considerable journey before us; and we determined to take the shortest course to the celebrated fords of the Jordan, the bathing-place of the Greek and Latin pilgrims, and inseparably associated with the passage of the Israelites when they entered the Promised Land.

As we rode up the gentle slope from the shores of the lake, a miserable-looking, half-clad Arab, rose up out of the midst of a bush and gazed at us as we passed. He was the only human being, beyond our own party, whom we had seen since we left Mar-Saba;—who, or what he was, we failed to learn. Had it been in the dusk of the evening, a lively imagination might have taken him for the ghost of one of the drowned inhabitants of Sodom, still flitting about the shores of the avenging lake. The plain northwards was nearly a dead level. Not a blade of grass grew upon it. Our horses sank to the fetlocks at every step through the nitrous crust of the soft and naked soil. Towards the western side of the plain, where the ground begins to rise, tall banks and detached mounds of white marl every here and there appeared, many of them looking at a distance like walls and towers. Hot as it was, we pushed on at a rapid pace, impatient to reach the shelter of the thick woods that line the banks of the Jordan, and to enjoy the inexpressible luxury of quaffing and bathing in its cool and refreshing stream. All the way as we rode along, we could distinctly trace its course; for though the river itself,

hidden by the deep banks between which it flows, was entirely out of sight, the rich and beautiful foliage with which it clothes them sufficiently indicated its presence. Drawing, diagonally, nearer and nearer to it, as we advanced up the broad valley, we found ourselves, about a quarter-past two o'clock, getting in among the tamarisks, and thorn acacias, and nubk trees that skirt the eastern side of the plain, and that tell unmistakeably that the Jordan is near. A few minutes more and we were at the river's brink, drinking large draughts of its delicious water; wandering up and down, in a kind of ecstasy, beneath the grateful shade of its willows, and poplars, and sycamores, and eagerly searching out some safe and sequestered nook where we might play the part of genuine pilgrims by descending bodily into the sacred stream.

To bathe at this point is not unattended with danger to those who are not skilful and fearless swimmers, unless considerable caution be used. The river runs whirling, and eddying, and boiling along, like the tide at Corryvreckan, or among the *roosts* of Shetland. It is, moreover, very deep. Letting myself down by the long tough depending branches of a bush which, projecting from a little island, dipped into the rush of the stream, I could feel no bottom even when my head was a good way below the surface of the water. There is, however, at the point where we approached the river, a limited space where the water is comparatively shallow for a few yards from the bank; and here it is that the great annual gathering of the Easter pilgrims perform their ablutions. Only those who have been travelling for eight or nine continuous hours over a burning soil and under a blazing sky, without one moment's relief from the blinding glare of a fiery sun, can fully understand what it was to lie down amid the cool waters of the Jordan, and to look up through the leafy shade by which it is embowered. I never knew before, and never expect to experience again, any merely sensational feeling so exquisitely delicious. Without the invigoration of this bath in the Jordan, there were some of our party who could

hardly have encountered the fatigue of the remaining ride to Jericho.

And yet we had other thoughts than those of mere physical enjoyment at this river of Jordan. Could we forget those ever-memorable events in Bible history of which the Jordan has been the scene! Could we forget the day when the face of these hills, rising up a mile or two beyond it, were covered by the "ten thousands of Israel," as, marshalled in the full array of their many tribes, they came trooping down to the river's brink, when "Jordan was driven back," and when "they marched through the flood on foot," protected by the ark of their covenant God! Or could we forget that other and later day, when, not the ark of the covenant, but the Lord himself, of whose presence with His people that ark was the symbol, went down into this same river of the Jordan to receive a baptism of water, that was the sign of the more glorious baptism that followed when the Holy Ghost descended on Him from heaven in the likeness of a dove!

It could not have been far from this spot that these illustrious events occurred. It is evident, both from the terms of the sacred narrative and from the nature of the case, that a very long stretch of the river was embraced in the miracle that signalized the passage of the tribes. "The waters," it is said, "which came down from above, stood, and rose up upon an heap, very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off" (Josh. iii. 16). The city Adam here spoken of is nowhere else named in Scripture, but Zaretan, or Zarthan, is. In 1 Kings vii. 46, certain of the brazen vessels for Solomon's temple are said to have been made "in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan." Succoth lay up the valley of the Jordan at a distance of fully thirty miles. And though the site of Zarthan has not been certainly ascertained, it could hardly, from the above description, have been more than ten or fifteen miles lower down than Succoth. All the way, then, from that place to the Dead Sea, the bed of the river appears to have been

dried up for the tribes to pass over. It is vain, therefore, to attempt, as has been often and ignorantly done, to fix on the very point at which they crossed. The miracle was plainly designed to enable them to cross simultaneously at many points, and thus to render rapid and easy the transit of so vast a multitude of people. As the Scripture narrative tells, "The people *hasted* and passed over." At the same time, as Jericho was their mark—as it is expressly stated that they "passed over right against Jericho"—there cannot possibly be room for a question that the very spot where we stood was included in the stupendous miracle of that illustrious day. For aught that can be said to the contrary, those hurrying waters, from which we had just emerged, may cover that very part of the bed of the stream where, so soon as it was touched by "the soles of the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the Lord," the stream was cut off, and the waters failed.

The precise scene of the baptism of our Lord it seems impossible to determine. The language of Scripture regarding it is too vague and indefinite. Somewhere, however, within the limits of this great valley it undoubtedly was. And if the wilderness into which, immediately after His baptism, He was "led up of the Spirit," was the wilderness of Judah, the probabilities must be held to be in favour of the traditional locality opposite to Jericho.

We found the waters of the river much discoloured, like those of a stream in flood, although, from traces along the banks, it was evidently not so high at that moment as it had been some time before. In the Scripture narrative which records the passage of the tribes of Israel, it is mentioned, as accounting for the swollen state of the river at the time when they approached it, that "Jordan overfloweth all his banks, all the time of harvest" (Josh. iii. 15). It was at this very season—that of the first, or barley harvest—that our visit to the river had taken place. Now, however, at no period does it rise to the height which many expressions of Scripture would seem to

imply that it reached in ancient times. The "swellings of Jordan" in those days were such as to drive the wild beast from his lair amid the reeds and thickets by the river side. Hence the beautifully descriptive language of Jeremiah, when speaking of the Lord's coming vengeance upon Edom—"Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swellings of Jordan against the habitation of the strong" (Jer. xlix. 19). Several causes have probably combined to hinder the river from reaching so high a level now. In the course of ages the rapid stream can hardly have failed to scoop out for itself a deeper bed; and the cutting down of the woods that once clothed both the Jordan valley and the adjacent hills must have led to a more rapid evaporation of the moisture from the scorched and naked soil, and possibly also to a diminution of the quantity of rain that falls.

Lieutenant Lynch, who, in the face of countless and most formidable difficulties and dangers, executed a survey of the entire course of the Jordan, from the Lake of Tiberias to the Dead Sea, describes its breadth as varying from 80 to 120 feet. So endless are its turnings and windings in passing down the valley, that though the distance, in a straight line from the one lake to the other, is only 60 geographical miles, the length of the river's actual course is 200 miles.

It was not without an effort we tore ourselves away from a scene so full of fascination. Fain would we have spent the night beneath those umbrageous woods, and have been lulled to sleep by the cooling sound of that enchanting stream. Unhappily, the place was too unsafe. The romance of such an encampment might have been somewhat rudely and unpleasantly disturbed by a nocturnal visit from the plundering Bedouin of the neighbourhood, who, not unlikely, had been watching us all day from some of their lurking places, though we saw not them. Accordingly, after two most delightful hours spent at the Jordan, we set out for Jericho.

As the river at this point runs, as already mentioned, along the eastern side of the plain, the distance westwards to where

Jericho lies is not less than eight or ten miles. It cost us about two hours' riding to reach Er-Riha, the wretched village which is all that now remains to represent the ancient frontier city of Palestine. Our course was nearly at right angles to the river. The plain is barren and desolate here, as it is lower down. At length, however, as we drew in towards the hills of Judah, we found ourselves, all of a sudden, in the midst of corn-fields, and surrounded on all sides with an exuberant vegetation. How is this? What can have produced, on the edge of such a desolate region, this green and smiling oasis? How delightful to discover the source of all this fertility and beauty in the fountain of Elisha. How vividly did the fact recall to mind the words of Scripture—"And the men of the city (of Jericho) said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein: and they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake" (2 Kings ii. 19-22).

It was beside the very fountain where those pure and healthful waters still gush forth in apparently undiminished abundance, close in at the base of the hills, that we had instructed our mukharis to pitch our tents. Instead of this they had perversely planted them a good way out upon the plain, hard by the old gray tower, commonly, though of course without a shadow of reason, called the house of Zaccheus, where a small detachment of Turkish soldiers is kept for the protection, partly of travellers and partly of the cultivators of the neighbouring fields. It was too late to shift our encampment now. Everything had been unpacked. We were all greatly fatigued. The sun was sinking behind the hills, and there was nothing for it but to remain where we were.

The name Er-Riha is undoubtedly a corruption of Jericho; but whether this be the very site of that ancient city is not so certain. Josephus says that "the old city which Joshua, the son of Nun, took," was near the fountain of Elisha. That fountain, as already noticed, bursts forth at the foot of the hills, while Er-Riha is nearly two miles forward upon the plain. In this immediate neighbourhood, at any rate, Jericho stood. Our tents were placed on a little rising ground, at the foot of which ran one of the many streamlets that have their source in the copious fountain of Elisha. About a hundred yards east of us was the old square tower. Closer at hand were some noble fig-trees, and many fine specimens of the *palma christi* (the castor-oil plant), which here takes quite a tree-like size and form. The nubk, or dôm-tree, with its small yellow-coloured, acid-flavoured, olive-shaped fruit; and the zukkum, with its balsamic nuts and its formidable thorns, grew in thickets around us. Hard by, and fenced closely round with an all but impenetrable hedge of the thorny zukkum, was the little hamlet of Er-Riha—a cluster of low, flat-roofed, miserable huts, containing about fifty families. Their village is the only one in all the plain of Sodom; and both singular and shocking it is to be told that the foul sins of Sodom are there to this hour.

The more distant view was very grand. Behind us rose the lofty and rugged wall of the mountains of Judah. The sun was going down behind them. The sky above the jagged outline of their bare and rocky summits was flooded with golden light, while the face of the hills beneath was buried in a deep, rich, purple shade. Before us, away eastwards across the broad plain, towered up the long range of the mountains of Ammon and Moab; their far-extending ridge, like a line of fire along the edge of the sky, glowing in the bright radiance of the setting sun. These encircling and unchanging hills remain, but Jericho, which gave life and animation to the scene—Jericho, the city of palm-trees—Jericho, that withstood the armies of Israel—the private residence at a later time of the splendour-loving Herod



the Great—Jericho, with all its wealth and grandeur—has disappeared! The curse of the great warrior who first overthrew it seems to rest upon it still. When the night had closed in, and the noisy natives had withdrawn to their wretched village, we left our tents to walk abroad undisturbed beneath the silent, glorious, star-lit sky.

How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain
Breaks the serene of heaven!

The moon had gone down, but the glow-worms were sparkling like gems at every step beneath our feet, and the fire-flies in myriads were dancing in the genial air. It was more easy now than before to get away back among the ages of the past, and to recall the history of other times, and to rebuild and repeople Jericho once more, and to place ourselves in the midst of those great events, the memory of which must ever linger like an enchantment around this scene. Gilgal, "in the east border of Jericho," where the tribes of Israel encamped the same night they came over Jordan, could not have been far from our tents. Here, where we now stood, it may have been that Joshua "lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him with a drawn sword in his hand." To this very spot the solemn words of that divine "captain of the host of the Lord" may have pointed when he said unto Joshua—"Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy" (Josh. v. 15). These hills above us must have rung, again, to the blast of the rams' horns, which for seven successive days were blown beneath the walls of the beleaguered city. And where this deep silence now broods over the all but deserted plain, there must have been heard, rending the very heavens, the terrific voice of them that "shouted for the mastery," and the wild despairing shriek of those that "cried for being overcome."

But other sights and sounds have been here, besides these

"battles of the warrior," with their "confused noise and garments rolled in blood." The Prince of Peace, too, has been here, bringing salvation to the house of Zaccheus the publican, and giving sight to the blind beggars who sat by the city gates—acts of grace and goodness all the more touching that they were done when He was about to climb these hills, and to lay down at Jerusalem His own infinitely-precious life for the redemption of the world. There was enough in such recollections as these to encourage us to take home the words of the psalm, and—even in the midst of so wild a region as the valley of the Jordan, and with no better a defence around us than the slender folds of a tent—with good King David, to say, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety" (Psalm iv. 8).

I was never so struck with the effect of different lights upon a landscape as on the morning of the following day. It is one thing to see those heights that overhang Jericho when the sun is going down behind them, and when they are all bathed in the rich purple shades of evening. It is quite another thing to see them when the sun is at the opposite side of the horizon—right over against them, and staring them full in the face from above the mountains of Moab—stripping them of all disguise, exposing their ghastly sterility, and revealing every seam and scar that furrows their bald and burning brows. Not one solitary speck of verdure did that rugged range exhibit. The change was so great—the lovely scene of the preceding night was so completely disenchanted—that on first issuing, at sunrise, from my tent, I could scarcely believe the place to be the same.

And yet, what a noble natural rampart for a country these frowning walls form. Up through these hills there are just two practicable passes. The one to the left is "the going up of Adummim," inclining away to the south-west, and leading to Jerusalem. The other, to the right, is the inlet by which Joshua "sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Bethel, saying, Go up and view the country." The

mouths of these passes are not much more than a couple of miles apart, and the ancient Jericho occupied the space between them. It was, therefore, most skilfully placed as the frontier fortress of the land. On the one side it was, so to speak, the *tête du pont* of the Jordan, watching and commanding the passage of the river. On the other it fronted and closed the mountain passes by which alone the interior of the country could be approached. Hence, in the first place, the practical importance of that miraculous interposition by which, along a space of many miles, the Jordan was suddenly dried up; and by which the possibility of disputing the passage of the river at the memorable Israelitish invasion was entirely taken away. And hence, also, in the second place, the necessity that arose of at once attacking and overthrowing Jericho. Till that city fell the Israelites could not advance a single step beyond it. These considerations serve, at the same time, sufficiently to explain why it was that Joshua established his stationary camp at Gilgal, in the same neighbourhood, keeping open, as in such a position it did, his communications with the tribes settled on the farther side of Jordan, and serving, at the same time, as a base for all his military operations in the great campaign that followed.

About half-past six A.M., of Thursday the 30th, we broke up our encampment at Er-Riha, and, directing the servants to take the shortest course to the Wady-Kelt, as the left-hand pass is called, we rode up the course of one of the streams that issues from the fountain of Elisha. The shrubs and trees which appear only at intervals about Er-Riha, close into a perfect thicket nearer the source of these abundant waters. The thorny nubk, or dôm-tree, with its clusters of small but beautiful fruit, met us at every step. The birds sang merrily among the branches; and in the fresh morning air, and amid this teeming vegetation, this grateful verdure, these countless wild flowers, and these bright, glancing, gurgling streams, that were here flowing around us on every side, it seemed as if we were riding through one of the pleasant glades that lie along the base of some of our Scottish

hills. Within half-an-hour after leaving Er-Riha we had reached the Ain-es-Sultan, as it is now named, and which there can be no reasonable doubt is the very fountain that Elisha healed. It gushes out in a powerful stream from beneath a huge mound, quite near to the roots of the hills. The whole neighbourhood is one congeries of similar mounds, half covered by an exuberant growth of underwood, and composed, as the large hewn stones and bits of broken pottery plainly show, of the debris of an ancient city. A short way to the north of this spot, and jutting boldly out into the plain, shoots up the lofty mount *Quarantana*, so called from the tradition that associates it with our Lord's forty days' temptation in the wilderness.

From the fountain we proceeded southwards, skirting the bottom of the hills, till we came to the entrance of the Wady-Kelt, by which we were to penetrate the majestic wall that rose above us, and to return to Jerusalem. On the right, or southern bank of the Kelt, the mountain torrent which, in the rainy season, rushes down through the wady to which it gives its name, there still exist the remains of an extensive cistern, 657 feet in length, by 490 feet in breadth. The cistern is about one-fourth of a mile from the bed of the stream, at the point where it debouches into the plain; and here, there is every reason to believe, stood the later Jericho—the city of Herod's time—the population of which was about 100,000. The noble palm groves by which it was then embowered have all, like the city itself, disappeared. The Kelt, the stream which no doubt fed of old the now empty and ruined reservoir, is considered, by many respectable authorities, to be the brook Cherith, of which Elijah drank while he lay concealed from the wrath of Ahab, in some cave or fastness of the rocky and desolate defile down which it flows. This opinion, however, is disputed, and, as it seems to me, with good and sufficient reason, by others, who contend that the Cherith of Elijah must have been on the eastern side of the Jordan, and away out of Judea altogether. The statement of Scripture as to its situation is this—"He went and dwelt by the brook

Cherith, that is before Jordan." Now, this word *before*, taken in its ordinary English sense as meaning in *front of*, or *opposite to*, would be descriptive of no one particular locality whatever. Every tributary that falls from either side into the Jordan, from Hermon to the Dead Sea, must, in that sense, be *before* Jordan. But in Old Testament Scripture, when used to describe the position of one place with reference to that of another, this term *before*, signifies *to the east* of that other place, or, in other words, in the direction of the rising sun. Besides, when Elijah fled from the presence of Ahab to seek this hiding-place, the Lord said—"Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward." But the Wady-Kelt is not eastward but *southward* from Jezreel, where Ahab was. And further still, when the brook Cherith at length failed, and Elijah had in consequence to remove elsewhere, the Lord commanded him saying—"Arise, get thee to Zarephath which belongeth to Zidon." Now, to pass from the neighbourhood of Jericho to Zarephath would almost unavoidably have led Elijah right through Ahab's kingdom of Samaria, and have thereby exposed him to the very danger it was his object to shun. If, on the other hand, the true Cherith lay eastwards from Jezreel, and beyond the Jordan,—somewhere, it may be, in the hill country of Golan or Bashan,—he would simply, on leaving it, have to cross the country along the north border of Galilee, by a short and almost straight line, in order to reach the sea-coast at Zarephath, in the country of Zidon. In making such a movement he would be altogether out of Ahab's reach. Upon the whole, therefore, I am not disposed to accept the Kelt as the Cherith of Elijah.

There seems less reason to doubt that the Wady-Kelt is the valley of Achor, where Achan, for his trespass at the taking of Jericho, was stoned to death. It was in a valley adjacent to the fallen city, where that stern deed was done; and there is no other valley so notable as this near it. There is a passage, moreover, in the book of Isaiah, where a little light is thrown indirectly upon this question, and it is of a kind to favour the same

idea. In one of the prophecies of that book, when speaking of a period of future and distinguished blessing as being in store for Israel, it is said, among other things descriptive of this happy era, that the valley of Achor shall be "a place for the herds to lie down in" (lxv. 10). This expression evidently implies that, in connection with the conspicuous change that was to pass upon the land, Achor should become a place of safety, if not also of fertility, which is precisely the kind of contrast that would be applicable to such a valley as the Wady-Kelt, which from Isaiah's days until now would seem to have been a proverb for both danger and barrenness.

As we rode slowly up the steep and rugged bridle-path that winds, now along the bottom of the pass, now far up the side of the beetling cliffs that wall it in, it was impossible not to feel how utterly helpless one must be if attacked in such a place. It is the natural home of the eagle and the brigand. No one who has seen it will wonder to read, in our Lord's parable of the traveller that went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, that "he fell among thieves." In our Lord's time, when so many persons must have been daily passing through this valley, the robber's trade could hardly fail to have been a thriving one. Even now, when travellers are so few, the Bedouin still contrive to do a little in the old line—enough at least to preserve the ancient reputation of the place.

As for us, however, we met with no adventure of any kind in the Wady-Kelt. With regard to the peculiar character of its scenery, its utter loneliness and savage grandeur would, no doubt, have struck us more had we not, on the preceding day, become familiar with scenery of a similar sort in the gorge of Mar-Saba, and in the Nakb-Kaneitarah, when descending from the wilderness of Judah to the shores of the Dead Sea.

About midway between Jericho and Jerusalem, where the valley, narrowing and becoming shallower and tamer as it ascends, begins to lose itself among the hill tops, there are ruins by the wayside of an extensive building—probably a castle or

khan, or, perhaps, partly both—which may have been the old half-way house of this somewhat perilous road. The parable of the good Samaritan implies that there was an inn somewhere in this neighbourhood; and there is nothing at all unlikely in the supposition that it may have stood on this very spot. There is a fine well close beside it—deep, and evidently old—which coincides with the same idea. We dismounted near it, at a turn of the road where “the shadow of a great rock” afforded the only shelter we had met with from the oppressive heat and glare of the sun, since leaving Jericho, in that “weary land.” There we enjoyed a half-hour’s delightful rest, rendered still more refreshing by copious draughts of water, perfectly pure and cold, from the adjoining well. Beyond this point the hills, though still brown and bare, were less arid and rocky than we had found them near Jericho. We had now the Mount of Olives in sight; and as we approached it traces of cultivation began to appear in the open upland valley, along which our path kept winding still onwards and upwards among the hills. At the head of this upper valley we came to the well-known fountain, sometimes called the Well of the Apostles, from some tradition that they drank of its waters as they came up with their Divine Master from Jericho to the Holy City. It is the fountain spoken of, in the early part of this chapter, as being held by some to be the En-shemesh of Judah’s north border, and whose claims to this distinction I ventured to dispute in favour of the other fountain, some miles to the south of it, on the way to Mar-Saba. The Arabs call it Ain-el-Haud.

From this fountain, which discharges itself from under a little Saracenic arch into a stone trough in front of it, the road rises all at once, by a very sharp ascent, out of the valley, and passing over the rocky ridge above, drops down upon the sweet sequestered village of Bethany, which lies in a hollow on the opposite side. We were only too happy to have this opportunity of paying a second visit to the village of Mary and Martha; the favourite resort of our blessed Lord. At this point we fell, of



course, into the same road along which we had traced His sacred steps, less than a week before. Round the shoulder of Olivet we now again took our way, crossed the valley of Jehoshaphat at Gethsemane, and re-entering the city by St. Stephen's gate, we found ourselves, about mid-day, once more established in our clean and comfortable quarters in Max's private hôtel. The afternoon was devoted to the writing out of my notes on this glorious excursion. In the evening, accompanied by my friend Mr. Stevenson, the only other individual of our company who had any strength remaining, I joined a large party, to which we had been all invited, at the bishop's. In conversation there with Dr. Macgowan, Dr. Valentiner, and others, whom the party included—able and accomplished men, long resident in Judea, and thoroughly acquainted with it—I was glad to have the opportunity of talking over the scenes I had visited, and the opinions at which I had arrived; and of getting my views on doubtful points either corrected or confirmed. When at length the party broke up, both my fellow-traveller and myself were so thoroughly worn out that we could with difficulty drag our limbs after us, as, guided through the dark streets by the glimmer of the paper lantern carried before us, we made our way home.

CHAPTER VIII.

Preparations for leaving the city—Hiring of horses and signing of contracts—Delays—Trials of patience—A weary night—At length all is ready—The long cavalcade defiles at sunrise through the streets—Issue forth by Jaffa gate—Ascend Scopus—Farewell view of Jerusalem—Reflections—Territory of the tribe of Benjamin—Its aspect and character—Its cities, Nob, Gibeah, Ramah—The Gibeonites and their towns—Bireh, the ancient Beeroth—Bethel and Ai—Ain-Yebrûd, its fertility—The country improves on entering territory of Ephraim—Sinjil—Seilôn, the ancient Shiloh—Lubbân, or Lebonah—Its ruined khan and rich plain—First sight of Gerizim and Ebal—The plain of Mukhna—Enter the valley of Shechem in the dark—Camping ground outside of Nablouse—A Sabbath at Jacob's Well and Joseph's Tomb—The Samaritans of Nablouse—Their synagogue and sacred books, and old antipathies—Nablouse and its people—Samaria—Jeba—Santr—An unexpected military escort and their mimic fights—Dothan identified—Kefr-Khud, and the deep defile beneath it—Jenin, the ancient En-gannim, and its turbulent people—The plain of Jezreel—Threatening affair with the Bedouin in crossing it—Arrive at Nazareth.

HAVING engaged to meet our friend Mr. Tennent on a given day at Damascus, the time was now come when we must prepare to leave Jerusalem. Gladly should we have turned days into weeks, had this been possible, that we might visit and revisit, over and over again, the countless scenes, so full of sacred interest, with which the city and its environs abound. Had our leisure been greater, our labour would certainly have been less, though it may, perhaps, be doubted whether, in that event, we should have accomplished much more than we actually did. At any rate, we had made the most of our opportunities and means. For myself I felt it to be an ample recompense for all the exhausting labour of the busy week that had passed since

we got our first sight of the Holy City, that I was now carrying away with me as clear and definite a conception of Jerusalem and the country round it, as of almost any one of the most familiar scenes of my native land.

Friday, the 1st of May, was intensely hot. The scirocco, whose burning breath we had experienced for several preceding days, was still in full force. We had intended setting off in the course of the day, but the state of the atmosphere was such as to reconcile us to the delay, which the usual dilatoriness of Orientals had rendered inevitable. Instead of having his horses all in readiness early in the forenoon, as had been agreed upon, Ahmed, our chief mukhari, met us with a long list of excuses. Some of the horses were at Bethany and some at Bethlehem, and they could not be all got in till the evening. In short, there was nothing for it but to postpone our journey till next day. But bent as we were on spending the approaching Sabbath at Nablouse, where we could have such memorable places to preach to us as Gerizim and Ebal, Joseph's Tomb and Jacob's Well, it was very desirable that we should be on the march on the Saturday long before break of day. The distance from Jerusalem is upwards of forty miles—a long and laborious journey to make in Palestine in a single day.

Engagements of a merely verbal kind are not much worth in Syria. The traveller who wishes to have the bargain made with him kept, must be at pains to see it all written out, signed and sealed, before he starts. For this purpose a meeting with our friend Ahmed, a tall and rather lanky Syrian, was held in presence of the British consul. To mount our party, consisting of three ladies, four gentlemen, and our Italian servant, Gaetano, we required of course eight horses. In addition to these, four others were necessary to carry our tent equipage and general baggage. For these twelve animals, our agreement bound us to pay at the rate of 33s. 4d. a-day. They were to be all in attendance at Max's an hour after midnight, and ready for the road. Half the hire of the beasts for the whole journey



was paid down on the spot before leaving the consul's office. The other half the contract bound us to pay at the end of our journey in the event of our being satisfied that Ahmed had fulfilled his part of the engagement. This important business being duly settled, the rest of the day was devoted partly to a general survey of the city, and partly to those visits to the Jews' place of wailing and to their synagogues, which, for the sake of keeping things of the same class together, have, somewhat out of their proper chronological order, been already described.

In view of the early march that was before us on the following morning, I had gone to bed about ten o'clock, and was just dropping asleep, when a sharp voice at the open window of my bedroom called my name. On the instant I recognized it as that of an old friend, Mr. Graham, of Fereneze, who had for some years been resident in and about Jerusalem. He had happened, a few days before our arrival in the Holy City, to have gone down with Dr. Porter, of Damascus, to explore Philistia, from which he had just returned. Hearing of our intended departure, he had hastened down to our hotel to endeavour to induce me to prolong my stay in Jerusalem. "Is it you, Graham?" I said; "pray sit down, my dear fellow, where you are, and let us have a chat, for I am really too tired to get up. A chat, and a long one, we had accordingly, in this sort of Pyramus and Thisbe style. Having at length finished our colloquy, and neither having seen the other, we said our adieus—

*Talia diversâ nequicquam sede locuti
Sub noctem dixêre—Vale: partique dedêre
Ocula quisque suos, non pervenientia contra!*

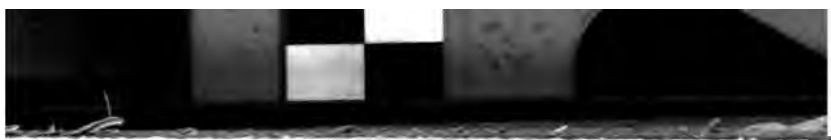
It is hardly fair, indeed, to apply the expression "in vain" to this interview, purely vocal though it was. It was the means of procuring for me the use of a first-rate English saddle for my approaching journey—a boon, the full value of which can be fully understood only by those who have bestrode for a few weeks the Syrian article which bears the same name. Old and

early familiarity with horseback, had led me too hastily to conclude that the saddle of the country, be it what it might, would suit me well enough. The experience of the few preceding days had somewhat modified my opinion on that subject; and I was therefore only too glad to avail myself of my friend's obliging offer, which insured me of reaching Tripoli not only much less fatigued than otherwise I should have been, but also with a whole skin. On getting up some hours afterwards, I found the promised saddle lying at my bedroom door.

As had been previously arranged, our party were all busily engaged at the breakfast-table by one o'clock A.M., laying in, upon Sir Dugald Dalgetty's far-sighted campaigning principle, not only such ordinary, but such extra provision as the exigencies of a long day's march might perchance require. But alas! for the virtuous effort we had made in getting out of bed at so unnatural an hour. It turned out that our excellent friend, Mr. Grant Brown, whose Arabic tongue was the *open sesame* on which we relied to pick every lock that might happen to bar our way on passing through the land, had unluckily forgotten to procure the written order from the governor of the city, without which no traveller can leave it till the gates are opened at break of day. There was no help for it now. To stretch ourselves out on the divans of the public room, and to try to catch a little more sleep, was the only practicable resource—

Come what come may, time and the hour
Wear through the longest day,

and through the longest night too. The dawn began at length to trace the outlines of Olivet against the verge of the eastern sky; the stars grew pale, and sank insensibly into the increasing flood of light; the singularly harsh and unmusical *reveille*, like kettle and tonga, of the Turkish garrison, sounded over the city; and we were again all astir. But eager as we were to be off, Ahmed and his two followers, Halil and Hassan—the one a bandy-legged, sturdy, thickset, resolute-looking fellow, the



other a big, soft, witless-like creature, evidently the slave or Gibeonite of the two seniors—were in no haste at all. They were in attendance, it is true; but not a single sumpter mule was yet laden, nor a single steed saddled. In such a country and in dealing with such a people, there would seem to be only two possible results that must, one or other, in the long-run arise—that one must either go mad, or grow as apathetic and off-putting as themselves. After an intolerable three-quarters of an hour spent in urging, scolding, threatening, coaxing, helping, hindering, the tumult at length ceased, the cavalcade was extended in line far up the narrow dirty lane outside of the hotel, and we began to move. Defiling slowly along the dingy street of the bazaars, scrambling up the sharp staircase-like ascent that scales the townward face of Zion, and which resembles not a little one of those precipitous *closes* that *rib* the sides of the old town of Edinburgh; passing next through the market-place that opens out to some width beneath the old gray, solid, rock-like tower of Hippicus, we at length reached the Jaffa gate, where we bade farewell to a city whose very dust and rubbish can never fail to be dear to every Christian heart. Even of the literal Jerusalem, one feels under the inspiration of its many touching and awful memories, as if it were hardly an exaggeration to say—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

When we had got fairly out into the open, we called a halt, till the straggling rear should close up, and to satisfy ourselves that our muster was complete. Ahmed having been summoned to the front, cantered up on his clever little donkey—his long legs sweeping the ground—and having received his orders to take the lead and show the way, we, at last, fairly began our march. Crossing diagonally the broad plateau that stretches out on the north-west side of the city, and passing the valley of the Kedron near its upper extremity, where it is little more than



a gentle hollow, we fell into what is called the Damascus road, which led us right through the camping ground of Titus, and over that famous hill of Scopus, so well known as that from which he first surveyed the devoted city. From the brow of this historic height it was that we took our parting view of Jerusalem. As seen from this point the city has less of that fortress-like appearance which it presents when surveyed from the Mount of Olives, or from the bed of the valley of the Lower Kedron. The deep chasms with which, on these two sides, nature has so formidably entrenched it, and the rocky precipices from whose summits it there looks so proudly down, give, even now, to its eastern and southern aspects, the unequivocal look and character of a place of strength. At the same time there is no side on which it could have shown to greater advantage, considered as a royal city and as the capital of a kingdom, than from that of the north. From Scopus, all the way across the broad expanse that spreads out from its base, the sight that met the eye of old was one rich and continuous prospect of groves and gardens, interspersed with the semi-rural residences and suburban villas of the wealthier citizens. Beyond these lay the lower city of Bezetha, and over it first Akra and then Zion would be seen, rising the one above the other, crowned with their stately towers and royal palaces; while to the left of Akra, upon the rocky ridge of Moriah, the temple, gleaming with burnished gold, would attract every eye as it flashed gloriously in the sun. How the heart of the devout and patriotic Israelite, coming up to worship from his distant home at the foot of Hermon or by the Sea of Tiberias, must have throbbed with deep emotion when this magnificent spectacle—the pride of his country, and, in his eyes, the joy of the whole earth—burst upon his sight! With what fond enthusiasm would he pause on this hill of Scopus to point out to his children, coming up for the first time with him to the feast, the various hallowed scenes and objects that had here suddenly opened upon their view! We could not but linger on such a spot, sadly changed



though the prospect which it now offers be. It was that very space before us, now so comparatively featureless and desolate, whose fruitfulness and beauty Titus began his memorable siege by sweeping all away. As Josephus relates—"He gave orders for the whole army to level the distance as far as the wall of the city: so they threw down all the hedges and walls which the inhabitants had made about their gardens and groves of trees, and cut down all the fruit trees that lay between them and the wall of the city, and filled up all the hollow places and the chasms, and demolished the rocky precipices with iron instruments." He converted, in short, that whole region on which taste and wealth had long been lavishing their resources into a naked *glacis*, on which there remained not even a bush or stone to shelter the defenders of a city which not Titus, but One whom Titus knew not, had doomed to destruction.

While we were casting this last "longing, lingering look behind," and indulging those feelings which the scene awakened, Ahmed, holding steadily on his way, had got almost out of sight on the farther side of the hill. Turning our horses' heads, therefore, reluctantly towards the north, we made off in pursuit. Behind Scopus we entered on a bare stony country, of no interest or beauty whatever as a landscape. Its general surface exhibited little else than a tame and rather sterile-looking expanse of gray, broad, flattish, or slightly rounded rocks—a sort of "mucklestane moor"—with strips of pasture and patches of corn streaking and spotting it here and there. The path led us along the slight hollow which seemed to mark the centre of this bleak table-land. Eastwards, in the remote distance, the mountains of Gilead rose over the undulating surface of the hill-country we were now passing through; though the Jordan, between them and us, far down in its own "sleepy hollow," was entirely out of view. Westwards, the most conspicuous object was Neby Samwil, the ancient Mizpeh, a sharp conical height which overtops the whole hilly region that spreads out far and wide around it. On a lower eminence, and much nearer at hand,

hard by the small Arab village of Shaffât, there are considerable ruins, supposed to be those of Noh, where David obtained from the priest Abimelech the sword of Goliath: and where, in consequence, Abimelech and all his priestly brotherhood were slaughtered by Doeg, the Edomite, at the command of Saul. On another height, in the same neighbourhood, called Tuleil-el-fûl, are heaps of stones, which mark it out as the site of some ancient city, and which are generally regarded as the ruins of Gibeah of Saul, the birth-place of that ill-omened king. It is here the camel-road by Beth-horon to Jaffa strikes off, and which, after crossing through the upper country, descends into the plain of Sharon, at a point some miles to the north of the pass by which we entered the hills when we came up from Ramleh to Jerusalem. A little to the north of Tuleil-el-fûl is Er-Ram. Large bevelled stones and fragments of columns built into the walls of the houses of the modern village, plainly indicate its antiquity, while the name it still retains, and the minute statements of Scripture as to the situation of the place, leave no room to doubt that here stood the Ramah of Benjamin.

About a mile and a half, or so, farther on, we came to Bireh, the Beeroth of Scripture, and one of the four cities of the Gibeonites by whom Joshua was so cunningly deceived. The district of country belonging to that people extended from this neighbourhood right across the hilly region westwards to the borders of the plain of Sharon, and formed a considerable part of the territory subsequently assigned to the tribe of Benjamin. "Their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim" (Josh. ix. 17). Gibeon, their capital, stood in the elevated plain that lies on the north side of Neby Samwil; and due west from it, on the outer edge of the hill-country, is the modern Kefr, considered to be the Gibeonite Chephirah. Kuriel-el-Enab, now identified with Kirjath-jearim, is situated nine or ten miles south-west from Gibeon, and about half that distance to the north-east of Gibeon is Beeroth.

By this very place, therefore, at which we had now arrived,



the crafty company of the Gibeonites, with their tattered garments, and clouted shoes, and mouldy bread, took their way down through these hills eastwards to Joshua's camp, in the Jordan valley at Gilgal. No wonder that so small-souled a people, as they evidently were, had taken fright. Jericho had fallen; Ai, within a few miles of their own frontier, had fallen too; and when "the smoke of it ascended up to heaven," the dismal cloud that hung over its ruins would be well seen not only from Beeroth, but even from Gibeon itself. Nothing but the entire unacquaintance of the Israelites with the localities and the tribes of Canaan could have made it possible for the Gibeonites so easily to deceive them. Verily, the tricksters had their reward. To be hewers of wood and drawers of water was their natural and fitting post.

The first object that attracted our notice in approaching Bireh was a small mosque, surmounted with a dome. It is built over a fine fountain, the waters of which gush out on its eastern side in great profusion, and water the whole vicinity. The village itself is some hundred yards farther on, and occupies a rocky ridge that rises above, and strongly contrasts with the smooth and beautiful grassy slope at the bottom of which the fountain stands. Its present population is estimated at from 700 to 800. There are traces of extensive cisterns below the fountain, and on the height above there are extensive foundation walls, whose peculiar masonry sufficiently attests both the antiquity and the former importance of the place. The two most notable ruins are those of a large khan and of a fine church, both in tolerable preservation, and the latter the work of the Knights Templars during the Crusades. While inspecting these remains, we noticed an ancient wine-press, resembling a large, square, shallow trough, cut out in the flat surface of a broad mass of rock that rises four or five feet above the level of the ground. In Isaiah's figurative description of Israel as the Lord's vineyard, the expression in our English Bible is that the Lord "*made* a wine-press therein." In the original Hebrew it is—"He *hewed*

a wine-press therein," and here we had a specimen of the very sort of wine-press from which this imagery was taken.

From the high ground beside Bireh we had a view of Beitin, or Beithil, the modern name of that ever-famous Bethel, where Jacob had his glorious vision of the ladder that reached up from earth to heaven, and where he builded that altar to the Lord which thereafter gave to the place its hallowed name. It was matter of much regret to us all that the length of the journey that lay before us forbade our deviating so far from our line of march as would have been necessary in order to visit it. It lies about two miles, or rather less, to the east of Bireh. We could, however, distinctly trace its position, and observe the aspect of the country around it. The whole vicinity appears to correspond exactly with what Scripture indicates regarding it. When Jacob lay down there, "he took of the stones of the place and put them for his pillow." The expression is significant. To this day it is a stony wilderness—treeless, barren, and bare. One ceases to wonder, in looking at it, that there should have been a strife between the herdmen of Lot's cattle and the herdmen of Abraham's cattle, when trying, in so sterile a region, to find pasture for the numerous flocks of their masters. Connecting that suggestive occurrence with the look of the country around the site of the ancient Bethel at the present day, we had a fresh example to show how indelible are the features of this remarkable country. At a little distance eastwards from Bethel, but out of our sight, was Tel-el-hajar—ascertained on good grounds to be the site of Ai—below which a pass leads down through the hills to Jericho. It was by this pass that Joshua's army advanced into the interior of Canaan.

Hitherto we had been passing, all the way from Jerusalem, through the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. In the language equally picturesque and graphic in which Jacob prophetically described, before his death in Egypt, the future lot of his several sons in the land of promise, he drew his illustrations both from the vegetable and from the animal world. In speaking of

Judah, the vine and the lion were the figures employed: "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." And again, "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up" (Gen. xlix. 11, 9). It is impossible to doubt that the grape with its blood-like juice, and the lion with his kingly voice and strength, were meant to be emblematic of Him who "sprang out of Judah," and of whom the Lord said, by the mouth of Isaiah—"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save" (lxiii. 1). But, is it a mere fancy to suppose that this peculiar imagery of the vine and of the lion had a peculiar fitness in connection with the district of country that was to be the lot of Judah's tribe? Certain it is that the vine flourishes nowhere in Palestine so abundantly, even at the present day, as in the hill-country of Judah, while, at the same time, that arid and lonely wilderness which the tribal territory of Judah included could hardly fail to have been the lion's native abode.

Of Benjamin, again, his father Jacob, on the same occasion, said, "he shall ravin as a wolf." The words, it is to be presumed, were meant to be predictive of that fierce spirit and predatory character which the tribe of Benjamin should afterwards exhibit. But here, again, is it only a fancy to conclude that some reference was intended, in the employment of this peculiar figure, to the physical character of the district in which that tribe was to have its home? The natural *habitat* of the wolf is among barren rocks and naked hills, from which he descends, under cover of the night, to find his prey in the richer plains beneath. The wolf is there to this day; and that gaunt and hungry creature is certainly no inapt representative of the sort of country through which we had just now come. There is, indeed, another and a more pleasing picture of Benjamin

sketched in ancient Scripture. It occurs in the chapter of blessings Moses pronounced, long after Jacob's time, on the several tribes of Israel. Of Benjamin he then says—"The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders." But this description, too, is quite in keeping with the dwelling-place of the tribe. Spiritual blessings are, no doubt, intended, but as descriptive of a locality, the only definite idea these words convey is that of strength and security. And where could any of the tribes of Israel be more securely lodged than amid the natural fastnesses of this mountain-land?

We were now on its northern border, and were about to enter on the adjoining inheritance of Joseph, otherwise known as the country of Ephraim or Samaria. Of Joseph, his fond father had lovingly said: he "is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall" (Gen. xlix. 22). The figure speaks of fertility; and of the same import are the words of Moses concerning the lot of the same tribe: "Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, . . . and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof" (Deut. xxxiii. 13, 15, 16). No language could more forcibly suggest that very combination of the pastoral with the agricultural, by which Samaria is distinguished; a country whose hills should be clothed with flocks, and olives, and vines; and whose rich and spacious valleys and plains should be covered over with corn. Already we had palpable indications that we were entering into such a country, so soon as we advanced beyond Bireh.

Dropping into the upper end of a winding valley, we found ourselves all at once in the midst of grassy banks and numerous cornfields. As it winds onward and downward, this sweet valley gradually contracts into a ravine, while at the same time it sinks deeper and deeper down among the hills. On reaching



this defile the path climbs gradually up upon the shelving strata of the steep hill face, where riding is both difficult and a little dangerous. From this perilous elevation, however, a noble view suddenly opens out where a bend of the valley brings the traveller all at once in sight of Ain-Yebrûd, perched upon the brow of a detached and finely wooded height, and surrounded on all sides with extensive and well-cultivated vineyards and oliveyards. Nowhere, save at Bethlehem, had we seen such indications of intelligent industry as here. The eminence on which the village stands fronts the mouth of the valley down which we had come, and which is here joined by another valley falling into it from the east. Pleasant, however, as it was to pause where we were, and to admire this attractive prospect, it was not so agreeable to follow the rather frightful-looking path by which we must approach it. None but horses accustomed, like those of Syria, to clamber every day up and down such hill-sides as the *facilis descensus* that lay before us, could have kept their feet on these slippery rocks. As it was, not more than two of our number ventured to remain in the saddle on this break-neck part of the road, though all got safely to the bottom of the hill. As the prefix *Ain* would have led one to expect, Yebrûd has a fine fountain in its neighbourhood, around which the shepherds had just then gathered their flocks of sheep and goats for the forenoon milking, and to give them drink. After a brief pause at the well we rode on. Leaving the village on our left, we entered into a labyrinth of those "paths in the vineyards," to which, in an earlier chapter, allusion was made in connection with the Scripture story of Balaam and the angel. These paths are lined with walls, some of them five or six feet, others eight or nine feet high; and all built with the stones gathered out of the vineyards. Beyond these we entered a deep and narrow ravine, the roadway, such as it was, being simply the dry bed, rocky and rugged, of a winter torrent. The steep hill sides, between which this rapidly descending path led us on, were all terraced and cultivated—clothed to their summits with



the olive, the fig, the pomegranate, and the vine. When at length, after about half an hour's riding, we emerged from the lower end of this picturesque ravine, nothing could be more graceful and pleasing than the scene that lay before us. At this point the valley branched out both to the right and left, among finely wooded hills. There was no mistaking the fact that we were now in Samaria. The characteristic distinction between it and the country of both Judah and Benjamin is, that while the territory of these two tribes is all on a high level, and forms one continuous upland country, the hills of Samaria are cleft in all directions, and down to their very foundations, by deep, broad, and fertile valleys. We had already seen, in the flocks and fruit-trees around Ain-Yebrûd, a specimen of "the precious things of the lasting hills," and we were now to witness, during the remainder of our day's journey, specimens not less marked and pleasing, of "the precious things of the earth;" that is, of the lower ground, "and the fulness thereof."

Our attendants having moved on with the baggage during the short stay we made at Ain-Yebrûd, we had lost sight of them ever since. We were now at a loss, in consequence, which way to go. There was a high hill in front barring our way to the north, and the question was, which of the two valleys that lay branching out before us—the one to the right, the other to the left—ought we to take, in order to get round it? After some hesitation, we decided on following the one to the right, in a north-easterly direction, and which brought us soon after to a place we at once recognized as the Ain-el-Harmyieh, or robber's fountain, as its name signifies, and which we knew to be upon our proper line of march. The fountain issues from the face of a shelving rock in a narrow part of the valley, which is overhung by wooded heights and tangled thickets, not ill-adapted, certainly, for the robber's trade. The fountain was almost dry, and the little water it contained was not very inviting. Anxious as we were, moreover, to overtake our people, we pushed on—sometimes through a jungle of underwood, sometimes through



cornfields, sometimes along the dry bed of a winter stream—for upwards of an hour. But for a frequent reference to our maps and to a pocket compass, we could hardly have failed to lose our way, where side tracks were ever and anon leading off on either hand. About one o'clock P.M., and after crossing the western extremity of a fine and well-cultivated valley, waving with standing corn, and spreading away eastwards, like an arm of the sea, among the hills, we found ourselves at the base of a bare, rocky height, running from east to west, and which the path we were following evidently led across. Here some peasants belonging to the adjacent village of Sinjil, comforted us with the assurance that we were on the right road to Lubbân—the ancient Lebonah—which lay on the north side of the height before us. As Ahmed knew we had arranged to halt at Lubbân, to rest both our beasts and ourselves, we made no doubt of finding him and his comrades there; and were thus relieved of all further anxiety about overtaking them. We were, however, unluckily ignorant of the fact that, from the point at which we had now arrived, there is another route to Lebonah that would have enabled us to see, in passing, one of the most interesting places in Palestine—the site of Shiloh. Till Dr. Robinson made the discovery, about twenty years ago, the true situation of Shiloh was entirely unknown. An old tradition had placed it at Neby Samwil, in quite a different district of the country. The slightest reference to the statement of Scripture regarding its actual position, had any previous traveller been at the pains to make it, must at once have set the tradition aside as utterly untenable. Nothing can be more precise than the language Scripture employs upon the subject. In the book of Judges it is told that Shiloh “is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah” (Judg. xxi. 19). Although Dr. Robinson, with this singularly specific passage before him, addressed himself to the task of searching out the place, the probability is, that after all, he would not have succeeded, but for

the circumstance that its very name has been, as it turned out, handed down among the people of the country to the present day. Upon the same hill we were preparing to cross, and in a situation perfectly corresponding with the statement of Scripture already quoted, there are ruins bearing all the marks of great antiquity, beside a modern village known to the natives as Seilûn. In speaking of Shiloh, Josephus sometimes uses this very word, calling it Σειλουν, and which, as Dr. Wilson remarks, is substantially the same as the full Hebrew form preserved in the word Shilonite.* There, no doubt, it was that in the days of Joshua "the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation" (Josh. xviii. 1). And there it remained till long after, near the close of the period of the judges, when the ark of the covenant was taken from it by the sons of Eli, and carried off to the camp of Israel. During all that lengthened interval of 300 years, Shiloh continued to be the rallying-place of the nation where they assembled to seek the Lord. It was the scene of many a great public event, and of many a touching incident in more private life. It was there that Joshua by lot "divided the land unto the children of Israel, according to their divisions." It was there that Hannah gave up her little Samuel to be dedicated to the service of the Lord. And there it was that old Eli, to whose care she committed him, fell backward from his seat by the gate of the city and died, when the appalling intelligence reached him that Israel was fled before the Philistines, that his two sons, Hophni and Phineas, were slain, and that the ark of God was taken.

The road we took across the hill left Seilûn at a distance to the east of us of not more than a couple of miles. The hill itself is bare and bleak, especially along the broad back of the ridge, and so stony is it all about Seilûn, that till the traveller approaches quite near it, he can hardly distinguish either the

* *Lands of the Bible*, vol. ii. page 295.



modern village or the ancient ruins from the masses of naked rock around it.

From the northern brow of the hill, and immediately above Lubbán, which lies close in at its base, there opened an extensive, varied, and noble view. To the south a fine pastoral valley stretched away up in the direction of Ain-Yebrud. To the north a rich and fertile plain, perfectly flat, and from one to two miles broad, appeared at our feet, bounded on the farther side by a lofty range of olive-clad hills. This plain, covered with various kinds of growing crop, and all of the brightest green, lay like a beautiful carpet spread out on the spacious floor of some gigantic hall, whose walls were the everlasting hills. A mile or two to the west of Lubbán this fine plain turned sharp round to the north, and disappeared behind a projecting mountain range.

The descent from the height that afforded us this view is so steep that it is only by a long succession of zig-zags it can be accomplished on horseback at all. The ruins of an extensive khan, and a copious fountain beside it, are the only objects of interest at Lubbán. Our mukharis had not arrived when we reached it, —a circumstance that disappointed us all the more that we were famishing with hunger, and had no chance of getting anything to eat till they should make their appearance. It was therefore a great relief to us all, when, about half an hour after our arrival, we had the satisfaction of desorying Ahmed's tall figure rounding the shoulder of the hill above us, and close behind him Halil and Hassan with the baggage train. At what point they deviated from the road by which we had come, we never exactly ascertained; but evidently they had fallen into it again. Scarcely had they reached the khan, behind whose eastern wall we were hiding ourselves from the fiery sun, when Gaetano was deep in the panniers which formed his especial care, drawing forth and arranging the materials of our afternoon repast.

By four P.M. we were again in the saddle, having still a long ride before us. Now, for the first time since leaving Jerusalem,

we had something deserving the name of a road. It was a mere horse track, to be sure, but running as it did along the level plain, it was smooth and easy. Beyond the projecting height already noticed, the plain runs nearly due north, narrowing as it proceeds onwards among the hills. To the left of our route the village of Sawieh was pointed out far up the hill side. About an hour and a half beyond Lubbân we came to a point where the plain terminates, on the edge of a narrow wady that runs away westwards, in the direction of the Mediterranean. The water-course which, in the rainy season, drains this district of the country, finds its way through the wady now alluded to into the Aujeh—a river that falls into the sea a few miles north of Jaffa. Two villages were now in sight. Kubalân, at the distance of two or three miles up the wady eastwards, and nearer at hand, Yetma, on the slope of the hill beyond it. There was something very sweet and home-like in the scenery of this sequestered valley. Its grassy knolls and clumps of trees, and flocks of sheep and goats browsing in its green hollows, as well as the whole character of the hills around it, forcibly reminded us of some of our own quiet Highland glens. Right across this little valley, our path led us away up the steep face of a range of hills beyond it, from the summit of which we looked down upon the extensive plain of El-Mukhna. The course of this plain is from south to north, and bounded, as usual, on either side by a wall of hills. When it opened upon our view, as we rounded the top of the hill, from the base of which it stretches away northwards, the shadows of evening were already falling across it from the chain of hills on its western side; while the bare and rocky range that shuts it in on the east, was all glowing with the rich warm hues of the setting sun. The plain itself, waving from side to side with corn crops, and dotted here and there with little groups of olive-trees, and without a single fence or visible division of any kind to break its even surface, was here and there still streaked by bright sunbeams shooting across it through the openings in the western wall of hills. Running

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our eyes along that western line of hills, there were two summits that rose pre-eminently above all the rest. The one was Mount Gerizim, the other Mount Ebal; and between them lay the narrow entrance into the valley of Shechem, where our day's journey was to terminate. The mouth of that valley was, at least, seven miles from where we stood. There was no time, therefore, to indulge in sentimental musings. Twilight is soon over in Palestine; and already it was all but certain that the darkness would overtake us before we could reach Nablouse. Down the hill face accordingly we rode, as fast as the rough and rocky nature of the ground permitted, and then away northwards along the western side of the plain. As we passed, some miles farther on, the village of Hawara, picturesquely planted on the steep hill face, several hundred feet above the level of the plain, the Syrian peasants were gathering in their flocks towards it for the night; each with his long brass-mounted gun over his shoulder, and a pistol or other weapon in his belt. There was just as much light lingering on the side of Gerizim by the time we approached the broad base of that noble hill, as to let us see that its fertile and verdant slopes were clothed, half-way to its summit, with corn; and thereby reminding us that Gerizim was the hill of blessing. The bare rocky steeps of Ebal beyond it, clothed in deeper shadows, we could now but dimly discern.

Half an hour later and night had fallen. With these lofty hills around us, and the sky clouded besides, the darkness was soon so great that we could with difficulty trace our path. One of our party, much fatigued with the long day's journey, had gradually fallen considerably into the rear, and as my wife and I had remained behind to bear him company, we had to find out the latter part of the way for ourselves. After rounding the eastern base of Gerizim the path slants away up along its northern side. It might have been easy enough riding in day-light, but it was rough work in the dark. Sometimes groping along the face of a steep declivity, sometimes scrambling across the dry bed of a rugged water-course, we at length gained the higher

level of the valley of Shechem, at the mouth of which we found our friends waiting till we should rejoin them. With Ahmed leading the way in front, we marched slowly on, through noble olive groves, towards Nablouse, the lights of which we now saw in the distance glimmering through the noble woods by which it is embowered. The town lies on the left, or south side of the valley, close in at the foot of Gerizim. Our camping ground was on an elevated plateau outside of the town and beyond it, surrounded with venerable olive-trees, and looking down on the luxuriant gardens of Nablouse, and on the fine stream by which they are watered. Within a quarter of an hour after we reached it our tents were all pitched, and a blazing fire, kindled by Gaetano, was throwing its ruddy glare on the gnarled stems of the old trees that stood sentry round us. Our portable table, a long and very light board, about two feet in breadth, pierced with a hole at each corner for the insertion of the moveable feet, was speedily laid out in one of the tents. Squatting around it, in Oriental fashion, on cloaks and railway-wrappers, and making the best of such cheer as Gaetano's not very perfect appliances, and not very distinguished cookery, enabled him to set before us, we forgot all our fatigues talking over the scenes and incidents of so deeply interesting a day. An hour later and we were all buried in sleep.

On the following morning, Sabbath the 3d of May, our first visitor was a young Syrian, a convert to Protestantism from the Greek Church, and teacher, under the auspices of Bishop Gobat, of a mission school in Nablouse. Ever since the unhappy occurrence which took place about eighteen months before, when by some unlucky accident, and in a moment of panic, occasioned by an attack of the fanatic Moslems, the Rev. Mr. Lyde, then in charge of the mission, shot one of the rioters, the mission has been all but entirely broken up. The little school taught by our young visitor is all that now remains of it. The Protestant community in the place amounts in all to only thirty persons—men, women, and children. The teacher both read

and spoke the English language with tolerable ease, and had a very good knowledge of the leading truths of the Bible. Entire strangers as of course we were, it was touching to see how the bonds of a common faith made him cling to us, as if we had been old and familiar friends. The Moslems of Nablouse are notoriously fanatical and insolent, and treat both Christians and Jews with scorn.

As illustrative of their character, Dr. Wilson, of Bombay, mentions, in his *Lands of the Bible*, that when visiting Nablouse in 1843, he and his fellow-travellers were assailed with the utmost rudeness in the outskirts of the city, and he himself struck with a brickbat on the back of the head. They pay little or no regard to the Turkish government, though, of course, nominally subject to it. Their city is the head-quarters of many of the old Syrian chiefs, who look upon the Turks as mere intruders on their ancient domain, and on their family rights and privileges. They are, in consequence, almost always on the brink of rebellion. Considering that such is the habit and disposition of the people of Nablouse, we had all the greater cause for thankfulness that neither in our wanderings about the valley, nor in passing, as we did in the course of the day, through the heart of the city, did we encounter the smallest incivility.

After our morning worship, at which the teacher of the mission school and his assistant were present, we read together most of the passages of Scripture that refer to this interesting and beautiful valley. Having thus filled our minds with most of the many memorable incidents of which in ancient times it was the scene, we set out, under the guidance of our young Nablouse friend, on a pilgrimage to Joseph's Tomb and Jacob's Well. The lateness of the hour at which we had entered the valley the night before, had made it impossible for us to form till now any definite idea of the scenery around us. High as our expectations had been, they were more than realized. Hardly anything, indeed, could be finer or more captivating than the prospect that lay before us on issuing from our tents. It was a lovely morn-



ing, and all nature was in its best attire. The valley, as already explained, slopes away down at its eastern extremity to the plain of El-Mukhna, from which it runs at right angles in a direction a little to the north of west. It is about four miles in length, Ebal walling it in on the north, and Gerizim on the south. The name Nablouse is simply the corruption of Neapolis—the new city,—as it came to be called when rebuilt by the Emperor Vespasian. The present city stands evidently on the site not only of Vespasian's Neapolis, but of the old original city of Sichem or Shechem. It is placed at the water-shed of the valley. The stream that descends from Gerizim and flows through the city, turns westwards as it leaves it, and flows towards the Mediterranean; while the inclination of the valley on the city's other side is towards the Jordan. The bed of the valley below our tents was one continuous succession of beautiful gardens extending westwards for more than a mile. In these gardens the gray olive, the dark-green fig, the lighter-hued odoriferous walnut, the smaller leaved pomegranate, with its large magnificent yellow-tipped crimson blossoms, the vine, the arbutus, the hawthorn, the noble oak of Scripture, the far-spreading terebinth, presented altogether a vegetation as rich and as variously and finely tinted as perhaps could be found in the same landscape anywhere else in the world.

Dr. Robinson remarks that he noticed little or nothing to distinguish Ebal from Gerizim—nothing that would lead any one to guess which had been the mountain of the blessing, and which the mountain of the curse. "The broad terraces," he says, "rising along the flanks of both, are alike cultivated."* I arrived at quite a different opinion. I do not of course mean to affirm that the memorable proceedings first commanded by Moses and afterwards carried into effect by Joshua in this valley of Shechem, were purposely arranged so as to be in harmony with the physical aspect and character of the two mountains in ques-

* *Later Biblical Researches*, page 231.

tion. At the same time, bearing in mind the symbolic nature, both of the Old Testament economy as a whole, and of that particular and most impressive transaction that was here exhibited, it is at least natural to suppose that in the very look of Gerizim there was something to suggest the idea of blessing, and in that of Ebal to suggest the idea of a curse. It was not, however, I am very sure, under the misleading influence of any such prepossession that I surveyed these confronting hills, and yet the difference between them appeared to me marked and conspicuous. Ebal is much steeper, more destitute of soil, and altogether greatly more rocky and barren than Gerizim, whose sides are more sloping and clothed with a much richer and more abundant vegetation. To one, indeed, entering the valley from the west, as Dr. Robinson on the occasion in question did, the hills, as seen from that quarter, might present no very noticeable difference. But towards the eastern extremity of the two ranges, where both rise to their most commanding elevation, and where, properly speaking, it is that the specific heights are found to which the names of Ebal and Gerizim were given, the contrast between them is obvious and strong. And what a sight it must have been when the assembled tribes of Israel, led on by their brave and godly chief, thronged the space between these confronting hills to hear the solemn words of awful warning on the one hand, and of gracious encouragement on the other, in which they were there addressed by command of their covenant God! Never, save around the base of Sinai, was such a congregation gathered together. And yet the sermon they heard on that memorable occasion is one that is still preached every day; for what is all true preaching but a persuading of men by the terror of the Lord to flee from the wrath to come, and a beseeching of them by the mercies of God to lay hold on eternal life!

The scriptural associations of this remarkable valley, however, carry us further back than to the days of Joshua. It was to this valley that Abraham came, on his first arrival from the distant East, into the land which God had promised to show

him. He "passed through the land to the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh," or rather unto the oaks or terebinths of Moreh. Here it was that to the "father of the faithful" the Lord appeared and said—"To thy seed will I give this land;" and here Canaan's first altar was erected to the worship of Jehovah.

To this same valley came afterwards Abraham's grandson, Jacob, as he journeyed from Padan-aram. "He came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan;" and *there*, to this day, to aid us in identifying the spot, stands a village, not two miles distant from the eastern entrance of the valley, bearing the name of Sâlim. It lies at the foot of the hills on the farther side of the plain of El-Mukhna, and looks, therefore, right over to Shechem. In this neighbourhood, too, it was that Jacob bought the parcel of ground in which he digged a well, and where long, long afterwards, the bones of his son Joseph were buried, "which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt." We were now upon our way to this very well and tomb, talking, as we proceeded down the valley towards them, of those memorable Scripture scenes and incidents to which reference has now been made. The tomb and the well are not more than three or four hundred yards apart; and they are both at that end of the valley by which Jacob approached it. The well is close in at the roots of Gerizim. The tomb is in the middle of the valley, or perhaps a little beyond it towards Ebal. It is a small inclosure of not more than from twenty to thirty feet in diameter, surrounded by a very white wall ten or twelve feet high, which made it a conspicuous object in the midst of the cornfields. Within this inclosure, which has no roof over it, there is a little arched mound of stone and lime that covers the grave of Joseph. At either end of the mound is a small pillar—the one, according to the tradition of the place, marking the last resting-place of Joseph's son Ephraim; the other, that of his son Manasseh—the heads of the tribes whose inheritance this country of Samaria came afterwards to be. Save these simple memorials, there is nothing else whatever to be seen at

the tomb. It is kept in repair by the Jews of Nablouse; but like all the other memorials of the Hebrew patriarchs, it is an object of reverence to the Moslems too, and to this cause its careful preservation may be partly ascribed.

From the tomb we crossed the fields to Jacob's Well, rubbing occasionally between our hands as we went the ears of the growing corn, as on a Sabbath of old certain other disciples of Jesus did. The well is not easily found. There is no building over it or near it to mark it out, like the tomb, from a distance; and the path that formerly led to it has been purposely obliterated by the present churlish occupant of the fields around it. But for the local knowledge of our guide from Nablouse, we might very probably have searched for it in vain. The stonework that till within the last few years remained entire, and that shut in the mouth of the well, is now partly broken down; and the well itself has either been entirely filled up, or its mouth has been roofed over and covered with rubbish. Certain it is, that though we crept down into the cavity beneath the arch, we could discover no trace of an opening into the well. It were surely worth the while of some of our European consuls in Syria to make an effort to have this piece of barbarism undone. It is known that the well is a shaft cut down through the solid rock, and that it cannot, therefore, have been materially injured. Without much difficulty it could be cleared out and restored to its former state. Every reader of recent works on Palestine is familiar with the curious incident of the Bible that was accidentally dropped into the well and afterwards recovered. Mr. Bonar, in the narrative of the Scottish missionaries to the Jews, tells us how, as he was leaning over the hole in the top of the arch, his Hebrew Bible slipped from the breast-pocket of his coat and disappeared, as he naturally thought for ever, in the depth below. Dr. Wilson, in his *Lands of the Bible*, completes the story by telling us how it was found and fetched up after it had lain at the bottom of the well for several years. Having lowered one of his attendants by a rope, the Bible was found imbedded in the mire,



the well being all but dry. Before leaving the place, we ourselves had a Bible adventure, too, though quite of a different kind. We had been sitting together, at a little distance from the well, upon the remains of an old wall, talking together, and turning up passages of Scripture bearing on the scenes around us. On rising, I unfortunately left my Bible behind me. It was soon missed; but before I had got back to the spot the Bible had been carried off. My suspicions immediately lighted on a woman I had noticed hanging about near us while we were sitting on the wall, but who, like the Bible, was now nowhere to be seen. Having communicated this circumstance to our young guide, he proceeded immediately to a little hamlet—Belât by name—about half a mile off, and to which, he had no doubt, the woman belonged. From some of the other villagers he soon discovered that my conjecture was well founded; and they at once pointed out to him the culprit's house. It was not, however, without a struggle, in which the poor fellow was actually beaten by the woman's husband, that he at length succeeded in recovering the lost Bible. It was a Bagster's Treasury Bible which I valued much, not merely for its own sake, but because it was the memorial of a deceased and beloved member of my flock to whom it formerly belonged. This little and perfectly characteristic incident over, we resumed our study of these intensely interesting scenes. We could now see, what the darkness of the previous night concealed, that the well is little more than a hundred yards from the upper end of the path by which we entered the valley. Up that very path in all probability it was that Jesus came on that memorable day, when "being weary with His journey, He sat thus on the well." He had come, as we did, from Judea; and from the nature of the country, His road must have been substantially the same as ours. The well on which He sat, as the woman of Samaria testified, was "deep;" and in perfect harmony with her statement, this well we had been visiting, according to the careful measurement made by Dr. Wilson, has a depth of seventy-five feet. The well on which Jesus sat was at the base of Gerizim;

for the woman said, pointing evidently as she spoke to the height above, "Our fathers worshipped in *this* mountain;" and not only is the well we saw at the foot of Gerizim, but on the summit of that hill to this day the ruins of the old Samaritan altar are found. There can be no possible doubt, therefore, as to its identity at once with the well of Jacob and the well of Jesus. Here, then, on this very spot, beyond all question, it was that the Son of God, "in fashion as a man," forgot His weariness and His thirst in teaching a poor profligate Samaritan woman what she must do to be saved!

Alas! it is not the water of the well alone that has dried up. In this valley the water of life has long been dried up too. The words of Jesus have been fulfilled: "Neither in Jerusalem nor in this mountain" do men worship the Father. The Samaritans, indeed, still annually climb to the summit of Gerizim to slay their paschal lamb; but they know not God as the Father of our Lord; and not knowing God as He is revealed in Christ, they are still ignorant of the great truth that was taught here eighteen hundred years ago, that the sacredness of places has altogether passed away. "They worship they know not what." And yet the very existence of such a remnant of the Samaritan people dwelling here in Shechem to this hour—the remnant of a people who are found nowhere else on the face of the earth,—is surely not the least striking of the many marvellous testimonies which this whole land bears to the authenticity and the inspiration of the Bible.

On our way back from the well to our tents, we passed right through Nablouse. Its population is said to amount to about 8000, of whom 500 are Christians of the Greek church, 50 are Jews, 30 are Protestants, and 150 are Samaritans, the rest being all Moslems. The streets are exceedingly narrow, but the houses are solid looking, tall, and tolerably well built,—decidedly superior in their general appearance and character to those of Jerusalem. The people gazed at us as we passed along, but moved neither hand nor tongue against us. Before leaving the city we



paid a visit to the Samaritan synagogue. The entrance to it was by strong doors and dark narrow passages, that reminded one of the entrance into a prison. A regard to safety in such a place probably demands such precautions. In a small court within, was a fine orange tree laden with fruit, and scenting the air with its pleasant odour ; but there was no savour about the place of worship we were entering of that blessed name which is "as ointment poured forth." The rabbi met us in the court and led us into the *penetralia* of the place, and showed us some of those ancient manuscripts of the five books of Moses, which constitute their chief boast and treasure. One of these they allege to have been written by Abishua, the great grandson of Aaron, and to be therefore about 3300 years old. A very full and interesting account of these Samaritan manuscripts is given by Dr. Wilson in his learned and well-known work on these Bible lands. From the portion of these manuscripts which he purchased, and from the information he obtained about the others, it appears more than doubtful whether much of their true history is known to the Samaritans themselves.

It is a singular fact, that the old Samaritan antipathy to the Jews is as strong as ever. Gerizim is still their holy place. The five books of Moses are still all of the old Testament which they receive. In short, their whole condition, character, habits, belief, and worship, are precisely what they were two thousand years ago.

When, late in the afternoon, we returned to our tents, it was with a deep feeling that this valley of Shechem had preached to us far more impressively than any human tongue on some of the grandest verities of the Word of God. It was no mere fancy of the poet to say that, here at least, we had found "books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." Conversing on such themes, the quiet Sabbath evening wore swiftly and pleasantly, and not, I trust, unprofitably away.

We left Nablouse on the morning of Monday, the 4th of May,

at seven o'clock. So many rumours had reached us in the course of the day before, that the country through which we were about to pass on the way to Jenin was in an unsettled state, that we thought it prudent to ask the governor to send a soldier along with us, by way of showing that we were under protection. A well-armed and well-mounted trooper was accordingly placed at our disposal—for a consideration, as usual—and with this escort we started on our journey. The level of Nablouse is 1800 feet above that of the sea; and as our course for the greater part of the day was a sort of steeple-chase across successive ranges of hills, the air, especially in the morning, was singularly pleasant. After riding about two miles down the valley westwards, we struck up the western declivities of Ebal, and, after traversing an upland valley on its farther side, and crossing a higher range of hills beyond it, we dropped suddenly down into the upper end of a narrow and finely wooded ravine, which opened out a mile or two lower down, quite near to Sebastieh, the ancient Samaria.

It was about nine o'clock when we reached it. A more commanding position for a great city could not easily be found. The hill on which the city stood is a detached spur, jutting out into the plain from the mass of hills which rises away eastwards behind it. These hills, at the same time, all but girdle the hill of Samaria round, by sending forward two parallel ranges which run westwards—the one on the north and the other on the south side of the plain—upon which Samaria looks proudly down. Imagine a lofty headland, stretching out from the rocky shore into the sea, at the head of some capacious bay. The headland is the hill of Samaria, the broad bay is the plain around and before it, the shores that form the sides of the bay are the lofty hills that sweep along the outer extremities of the plain, and by approaching each other in the distance all but shut it in. Through the opening between these hills the smaller plain of Samaria within passes out into the far greater plain of Sharon beyond, as the waters of a nearly land-locked bay issue forth at its entrance



into the great sea outside. At its eastern end, where it meets the mass of hills out of whose roots it springs, the hill of Samaria is separated from these other hills by a deep transverse cleft or ravine, from which it springs up at once by a very steep ascent. Towards the hills, therefore, on the east, as well as towards the plain on its other three sides, it presents a bold front which it must have been comparatively easy, in ancient times, to defend against any assailing force. At the same time, this very peculiarity of its position must have laid it all the more open to the peculiar dangers and miseries of an effective blockade. It is necessary only to look at its situation in order at once to understand how Benhadad, the king of Syria, should have been able so thoroughly to invest it as to have reduced it to that state of famine in which "an ass's head sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver" (2 Kings vi. 25).

The original name of Samaria it owed to Shemer, from whom Omri, the father of Ahab, king of Israel, bought it. Its subsequent name of Sebaste,—still preserved in its existing name of Sebastieh,—was given to it by Herod, in honour of his imperial patron, Augustus, from whom he had received it. In approaching it, as we did, from the south-east, the first object that meets the eye is the fine ruin of the Church of St. John the Baptist. It stands on the brow of the eastern face of the hill, and immediately on the left of the steep path that leads up to the modern village of Sebastieh. It contains the reputed burying-place of the Baptist, and professes to be that also of his execution. At least the latter half of this tradition is certainly erroneous. As regards the church itself, its style and ornaments seem evidently to indicate that it must have been built by the Knights Templars during the period of the Crusades. The church proper is roofless, though part of it has been converted into a mosque. The hill rises by successive terraces above the plain. The broadest of these is on the same level with the church, is about 100 feet wide, and sweeps round the hill. Along this ter-

race there ran, in the days of the city's glory, a magnificent double colonnade, of which many of the pillars still remain. Similar columns are also found still standing both at higher and lower levels on the hill. In the walls, too, of the houses of the modern village, and in those that face up the modern terraces used for retaining the soil, numerous fragments of similar pillars are found. These colonnades were not, improbably, the work of the splendour-loving Herod, and must have imparted an air of great elegance and stateliness to the city which they adorned.

The entire hill, sides and summit, is now under the plough. Along the very crown of it, I waded through wheat in ear nearly as tall as myself; and all over, it was dotted with pomegranate, fig, and olive-trees. Looking down from this commanding eminence one could not but feel how appropriate to the situation of this chief city of Ephraim are the words of Isaiah—"Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the *head of the fat valleys* of them that are overcome with wine!" (xxviii. 1.) No less truly descriptive of its condition *now* were these words of Micah—"What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof" (i. 5, 6). We had seen the desolations which the sins of Judah had brought upon Jerusalem, and here we had a picture, not less impressive, of the desolations which the sins of Israel had brought upon Samaria.

About eleven A.M. we left this interesting place, crossed the plain on its northern side, and proceeded on our way. The route we followed led us across the lofty range of hills which walls in this side of the plain. It was both steep and rocky, and occasionally somewhat difficult of ascent, but the views it gave us from its summit amply repaid the effort of climbing it. Southward, we looked back into the beautiful valley of Shechem, and



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far away beyond Ebal and Gerizim, along the sea of hills that stretches in that direction onwards to Neby Samwil, in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Westwards, and outside of the smaller plain of Samaria, the great plain of Sharon spread out far and wide, bounded on its farther side by the bright blue sea. The point of the coast due west of our position is some ten or twelve miles south of the ancient Cesarea. Northwards, in the distance, the varied outline of the hills that overhang the plain of Jezreel, and which terminate at their north-western extremity in Mount Carmel, ran along the horizon. Between these hills and the range on which we stood, lay an extensive landscape of mingled hill and dale, the valleys inclining all down to the west, and finally opening out into that breadth of level country that lines the sea-shore. On this north side of the range of hills we were crossing, and a little to the east of where we stood when taking this view, a lower range juts out in the direction of our line of march. To this lower range we slanted gradually down. Here a picturesque, terrace-like road, led us along the western face of the lower range, winding as it proceeded round the upper end of the many deep clefts and ravines by which its face is furrowed, and conducting us at every step through very pleasing scenery. In one of these hollows, on the brow of the hill, we passed the small village of Fendekumieh, and shortly afterwards came to the larger and much more imposing village of Jeba, of whose origin or early history not much seems to be known. At this point the road turns eastwards through a narrow opening, or *slack*, in the hills, at the farther end of which it descends all at once into a deep basin—a large and almost circular hollow among the hills, and which bears the suggestive and perfectly appropriate name of the Merj-el-Ghurûk, or *drowning meadow*. There being no outlet for the waters which flow down into it from the encircling hills, they gather in the rainy season into a lake by which, at that period of the year, a considerable portion of the hollow is submerged. The most striking object in this capacious basin is the fortress of Sanûr, perched upon

the summit of a detached, conical-shaped height, that rises from the margin of the level ground near the foot of the hills that inclose it on its north-western side. For long generations it has been the baronial stronghold of a family whose predatory habits have frequently provoked the displeasure of the government, and tasked their most vigorous efforts to reduce it. More than once it has stood a siege of several months' duration. In spite of these assaults, the family still survive; and at the very time we passed the place, their retainers, as we subsequently learned, were busily engaged in repairing its walls and restoring its defences.

While descending the rocky path that led down into this singular and romantic hollow, the horse of one of our party took an unmanageable fit, lashed out suddenly and furiously on all sides, and gave his rider a rather bad fall. The accident, though it produced no very serious results, had the effect of depriving us, for the rest of that day's journey, of the company and services of our friend and interpreter, Mr. Brown. By the time we had got nearly across the "drowning meadow," a distance of two or three miles, our fellow-traveller who had been unhorsed made the discovery that, though he had gathered up all his limbs, he had, somehow, left his spectacles behind. Being very near-sighted, the loss was a serious one; and not doubting that they had dropped where he fell, Mr. Brown, accompanied by the soldier from Nablouse, galloped away back to endeavour to find them. Meanwhile, we rode slowly forward, trusting to Ahmed's knowledge of the country to keep us on the right road till the absentees should overtake us. Not long afterwards, under Ahmed's guidance, we turned off to the left into a winding valley, which very soon shut the Merj-el-Ghurûk entirely out of our sight. At the head of this treeless but very sweet pastoral-looking glen, we came out upon the ridge of a long line of low grassy hills, where we lingered for half an hour, looking wistfully back along the path by which we had ascended, but not a human being was to be seen coming that way. Weary of waiting



we crossed the hill, and found ourselves ere long at the gate of a walled town, pleasantly situated on the side of a very pretty ravine. Ahmed was evidently now quite out of his reckoning, and, in the absence of our interpreter, we could ask no questions about the place, though many of its inhabitants gathered around us. So far as I could judge from our maps it must have been Merki at which we had thus arrived. Here we remained about an hour resting and feeding our horses, and looking anxiously out for our lost companions. When the hour had passed away without their having appeared, we at length gave up all hope of seeing them till we should reach Jenin. It was plain they must have gone thither by a different road from ours, and that we must try to find a way for ourselves. Just as we were preparing to resume our march, a troop of sixteen or eighteen armed horsemen rode out from the gate of the town. Their leader, a handsome man, splendidly mounted and richly dressed in the picturesque costume of the country, immediately on seeing our party, beckoned Ahmed to approach him. Having, no doubt, ascertained from him where we were going, he immediately advanced towards us, made the usual salaam, and then pointing to the road along which his troop were by this time proceeding, he pronounced the word *Jenin*. His meaning was plain. His road and ours were the same, and he was offering us his escort. Giving him back his one intelligible word *Jenin*, we followed him without further delay. The little corps of cavalry with which we thus found ourselves so unexpectedly associated did not appear to be regular troops. They were not in uniform. Hardly any two of them were dressed alike, and though all well armed, their weapons were not the same. Some had long guns slung across their shoulders, others had the usual long Arab spear, while one grim-visaged fellow carried erect in his hand an antique looking double-headed battle-axe that might have come down as an heir-loom from the days of the Crusades. Most of them had, in addition to these other weapons, pistols in their belts, and sabres at their sides.

Immediately below the elevated ground on which the town stood, a fine level plain stretched away on before us, apparently five or six miles in length, and not less than two miles in breadth. Our road ran along the middle of this plain, the greater part of which was under crop. It was shut in on both sides by a line of hills. Its general aspect, and the whole look of the country round it, reminded me very much of what, in its own county, is known by the name of the "Howe of Fife." As we jogged on through this fine fertile plain, our military escort amused themselves and us with displays of mimic war. Putting spurs to their horses, they would suddenly spring across the deep ditch that lined the road side, dash into the adjacent fields, scatter in all directions, and then wheeling round, rush at one another—some with spears, others with their guns unslung and carried at the *present* often for a hundred yards together, their horses tearing along all the while over ridge and furrow, at the very top of their speed. On one occasion the sham-fight was between the leader and a young man as elegantly attired and richly accoutred as himself, and who was no doubt either a brother officer or brother chief. It was a brilliant and exciting spectacle. Without other note of preparation than some look or gesture exchanged between them, they darted out from the midst of us, and circling at the gallop in opposite directions through the waving corn till they had got to a considerable distance from each other, they wheeled round, and came on at the same furious pace, their bright scimitars flashing in the sun. In an instant they were hand to hand, striking and parrying with the speed of light, but keeping their horses all the while in as rapid motion as ever, whirling round one another with a rapidity that mocked the attempt to trace their motions; and reminding us of those feats by which Saladin of old excited the astonishment and admiration even of Cœur de Lion himself.

Near the middle of the plain we met another troop, nearly similar in appearance and in numbers to the one we had joined. In the distance we also frequently observed smaller parties of

horsemen moving in different directions, as if patrolling the country. The leader of the party we met saluted us as he passed with a "buon giorno." These two words, however, seemed to exhaust his entire stock of the *lingua Franca*. When, after returning his courtesy, we tried him with a sentence or two in Italian, regarding our distance from Jenin, he could only shake his head and smile.

Imperfect, however, as was our knowledge at this time of our precise *whereabouts*, we knew that we must be in the immediate neighbourhood of Dothan, one of the most interesting scenes in Old Testament history. It stands on the eastern edge of the plain we were now passing through, and occupies a conical height or *tell*, somewhat similar to that of Sanûr. A tradition of the Crusaders had placed it in quite a different part of the country—at Hattin, to the west of Tiberias. Eusebius and Jerome, on the other hand, much older and better authorities, had assigned it a position twelve Roman miles north of Samaria. It is but recently, however, that its real situation has been actually ascertained. A few years ago, M. Van de Velde, when passing through this plain, had his attention arrested by a singular looking *tell*, rising up like an island near the margin of the level ground, and evidently covered with ruins. What place is that, said he to the Sheikh who was at the time his guide? "Haida-Dothan"—that is, Dothan—was his immediate and unhesitating reply. "Dothan?" said Van de Velde, in an inquiring tone, to make sure that he had not mistaken the Sheikh's answer. "Nahm, Dothan—Dothan—Dothan"—"Yes Dothan," was his reply, repeating the word three times over, and evidently piqued at what he supposed to be a doubting of his word. This important fact of the still surviving name, when put alongside of all that Scripture says regarding the ancient Dothan, and alongside also of the testimony of Eusebius and Jerome, may be considered as having conclusively settled the point of its identification. It is certain that the Dothan of Scripture stood on an isolated height. The following facts

plainly prove this:—When Benhadad sent a military force to seize Elisha in Dothan, they “came by night, and compassed the city *round about*.” In the morning, when the prophet’s servant looked down from his master’s place of refuge, and saw that they were hemmed in on every side, he was filled with terror. To relieve his fear, the Lord, at the request of the prophet, opened the servant’s eyes, and showed him the multitudes of the heavenly host by whom they were defended; in describing whom the sacred historian says that “the *mountain* (or *mount*) was full of horses of fire and chariots of fire round about Elisha.” This whole Scripture statement conveys just such an idea of the position of Dothan, as answers most exactly to the isolated eminence to which Abû Monsûr, the guide of Van de Velde, gave that name. Further still, the Scripture Dothan must have stood near the leading thoroughfare by which the Ishmeelite merchants of the East were wont to cross the land of Canaan on their way to Egypt. It was to a caravan of these merchants that Joseph was sold by his envious brethren. They had cast him into a pit or dry well at Dothan, intending apparently to leave him to die there, when “they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt” (Gen. xxxvii. 25). Now, this *tell* of Van de Velde is in just such a position. The camel road in the direct line from the country of Gilead, that leads across the country to the plain of Sharon, and so southwards along the sea-coast to Egypt, passes to this day within a few hundred yards of the place.

Though left, by the accident already noticed, in rather unfavourable circumstances for identifying any of the localities of the district through which we were now passing, we did not fail to observe the remarkable hill, with remains of old buildings upon it, which subsequent inquiries satisfied me could have been no other than this very Dothan. Here, then, it was, in this fine plain, where these Syrian troopers had been showing off before us their



military art, that Joseph found his brethren feeding their flocks on the memorable occasion when they cruelly sold him for a slave. In connection with this point, about the locality of Dothan, one is forcibly reminded of the truly nomadic life which, in feeding their numerous flocks, the Hebrew patriarchs must have been accustomed to lead. At the time to which the story of Joseph belongs, Jacob, his father, was at Hebron, near the southern extremity of Judea. When he sent out Joseph, saying, "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks"—the youth travelled all the way from Hebron to Shechem, a distance of nearly sixty miles, before he could get any tidings regarding them. At Shechem "a certain man found him, and, behold, he (Joseph) was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks? And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan." From the fertile plain of the Mukhna, they had therefore wandered on northwards, leading their flocks over the same hills which we had crossed in coming from Nablouse. And here, in these fertile fields, it was that at length Joseph found them—at least eighty miles from their father's home.

At the north end of this plain, the hills which bound it on the east sweep gradually down upon it, till they almost touch the opposite hills that line its western side. As we left the plain, and approached the bottom of this rising ground, the road we had been hitherto pursuing branched into two. At this point the leader of the horsemen reined up his beautiful dark-gray Arab, and pointing along the left-hand branch of the road, repeated emphatically, and two or three times over, the word *Jenin*. Having done so, he touched with his right hand, in Oriental fashion, his lips and his breast, and then wheeling about, and followed by his men, he rode away up in the direction of Birkin—a village that lies embowered amid olive groves, in a hollow among the hills. The road to the left, which of course

we took, brought us very soon close up to another village, which we fondly hoped might prove to be Jenin. It lay along the top of a steep bank of eighty or a hundred feet in height; but instead of crossing the ravine beneath it, so as to reach the slanting path that evidently led up to it, Ahmed held on his way right down the course of the ravine itself. He had no doubt made the requisite inquiries before parting from our late military escort, and we therefore followed—though rather disposed to grumble at the disappointment of the expectations we had indulged. In descending the ravine, which rapidly became both deeper and narrower as it advanced, we met numbers of the people belonging to the village on the height above. They were taking their sheep, goats, and cattle home for the night. Their look and bearing were anything but civil, and scarcely any of them acknowledged our salutations. They stared rudely at the ladies, and seemed sometimes as if they would hardly make way enough in the narrow defile to leave us room to pass. When we uttered inquiringly the word Jenin, they either made no answer at all, or repeated the word with a loud, coarse, jeering laugh, as if to say—"O yes, you will find it a fine thing to be at Jenin!" They were all armed; and on the principle of the old proverb, that it is better to flatter fools than fight them, we met their discourtesy only with more abundant smiles and salaams, and got through them at last without having to encounter anything worse than their saucy looks, and their noise. The village to which they belonged, as we subsequently discovered, was Kefr-Khud, notorious for the lawless spirit and plundering habits of its population. That whole neighbourhood indeed—Birkin and Jenin included—has the same bad repute; and hence, probably, the numerous military patrols we had seen in the adjacent district.

After fully half an hour's riding down this winding dell, where we could seldom see more than a hundred yards either behind or before us, we at length, and all at once, debouched upon a plain so vast—so sea-like in its broad level expanse, and



clothed with so rich a verdure—that there was no mistaking its name. “It is the plain of Jezreel,” I exclaimed, with great delight, the moment it opened out before us. “I now know exactly where we are. See there on the right—these gray swelling hills nearest to us are the mountains of Gilboa. Beyond these, and farther across the plain—that detached and loftier hill is the little Hermon. Farther away in the same direction still, that other isolated sugar-loaf looking hill peering out from behind the little Hermon—that is Tabor. That long range of hills fronting us, and running along the north side of the plain like a lofty wall—these are the hills of Galilee, in the bosom of which lies Nazareth. And then, far away to the left, where the sun is just going down—that huge bluff that terminates the far stretching range of hills from which we have just emerged is Mount Carmel, close to the sea-shore.”

This little speech is no flight of fancy, embodying and antedating a topographical knowledge subsequently acquired. The speech was really spoken on the spot; nor was there either merit or mystery in the making of it. I had carefully studied Stanley’s coloured map of this very scene only a day or two before; and its leading features, moreover, are so strongly marked, that a single glance, in such circumstances, must have enabled any one, possessed of the most common powers of observation, to recognize it as easily as the face of an old friend.

This noble plain, immediately to the right of the point at which we came out upon it from the hills, sweeps inward with a bold curve, like some fine bay indenting a rocky shore. At the opposite extremity of this curve, on a rising ground that projects into the plain, stood Jenin—its white minarets and dome-roofs gleaming at that moment above the dark foliage of its orange gardens and olive groves in the soft radiance of the setting sun. To have taken the string of the bow, and gone right across the bay-like curve of the plain, would have been our shortest course, but it would have led us through broad fields of standing corn in full ear. Instead of doing so we followed the

curve by a path which led us along the base of the hilly ground. To our great satisfaction, we found on reaching the place that Mr. Brown and his soldier-guide had arrived about an hour before us. They had come down the more direct road by Kûbatiyeh, and had already chosen our camping ground, and purchased some extra materials for our evening meal, of which we were now not a little in need. We were to bivouac on the slope of a pleasant bank, near the mouth of a little picturesque ravine, about half a mile to the south of Jenin. The tents were soon pitched, though we were infested during the process with a rabble of the Jenin people, clamorous for *buksheesh*, and whom we had not a little to do to keep at a sufficient distance from our baggage, the lighter part of which would have been sure to stick to their fingers. "Plenty bad mans here—*molio, molio cattiva gente*," whispered Gaetano, obviously in great trouble, for the poor fellow was a terrible coward. It was some comfort to him, and in such a neighbourhood not at all unsatisfactory to any of us, to find that two Turkish gentlemen whom we had seen at Samaria had just come up, and, with their servants, had taken up a position alongside of our tents. Being all well armed, they enabled us to present a better front to the turbulent rascality of Jenin. The governor of the place had been already upon the ground before we arrived, and had been informed of our being on the way. He had told Mr. Brown that the neighbourhood was in a very unsettled state, and that the Jenin people were in almost daily collision with the Bedouin Arabs, who were out in great force in the open plain. It would be quite necessary, he had said, that we should be provided with a military escort next morning to conduct us to Nazareth, and he had engaged to furnish one accordingly. By all we heard of him from the travellers who had joined our company, it appeared that both he and his people were greater thieves and desperadoes than the Bedouin themselves. I suppose this governor was the same amiable Sheikh Abderahman, of whom Mrs. Romer tells, in her recent travels through Syria, that shortly before she



visited Jenin, he cut off the head of his predecessor, rode into Jenin with this bloody trophy dangling at his saddle-bow, and soon after got himself installed in the dead man's place. He was extremely civil to her, she says, and presented her with large bouquets of orange blossom, because he had found out that she liked it! Altogether, we spent a rather uncomfortable night at this place. Again and again, after it grew dark, bands of the Jeninese surrounded our tents, shouting and screaming in their wild fashion, as if they were bent on mischief. About midnight especially, they came rushing up from the bed of the ravine, howling like wild beasts, as if they meant to take the tents by storm; but a few shots fired in the air to let them see that our watchmen were wide-awake, sent them trooping back again. Whether they really meant anything worse than to torment us with their noise, and perhaps to carry off some of our things in the confusion, I cannot say. They certainly did succeed in considerably spoiling our sleep.

In the morning all was quiet around our little camp; and at sunrise I wandered up the rising ground behind it, and sat down upon the ruins of an old building to enjoy a leisurely survey of the magnificent plain which, on the evening of the previous day, had for the first time so suddenly burst upon our view. A line drawn right across the plain in a direction due north from Jenin, would touch the western base *first* of Gilboa, *next* of the little Hermon, and *last* of Tabor, immediately beyond which it would strike, at right angles, the front range of the hills of Galilee, at a point a few miles to the east of Nazareth. The three hills I have named, as rising up one after another out of the plain, resemble a row of huge stepping-stones, by which, if in the age of the Titans the plain was covered by the sea, that gigantic race might have passed over by long strides from the Samaritan to the Galilean hills. Westwards from these hills, the plain spreads out in one smooth expanse, without rock or knoll, or even any undulation worth mentioning, to break its level surface, till at the Bay of Acre it reaches the sea-shore. Its breadth

however, which is about sixteen miles opposite Jenin, diminishes as it approaches the Mediterranean coast. The hills which bound it on the north run east and west in a tolerably straight line; but the range on its southern side sweeps along from Jenin to Carmel in a direction nearly north-west. The consequence is, that between Carmel and the western extremity of the Galilean range, the plain is narrowed to a neck not much more than half a mile across. From the sea to the three hills already named, as traversing the plain opposite Jenin, the distance cannot be less than from twenty to twenty-five miles. The plain, however, by no means terminates at these hills. Between Jenin and Gilboa, indeed, it extends eastward only for a few miles, beyond which it is headed in by a bend southwards of the Gilboa hills that connects them with those of Samaria. Between Gilboa and the little Hermon, however, and again between this latter hill and Tabor, the plain passes through into a wide, open country that stretches onwards to the edge of the Ghor—the deep trench-like hollow of the Jordan valley. From Gilead, east of the Jordan, and from the country on that side onwards to Damascus, the most direct route to Palestine led up through the open country now described, and so westwards into this great plain of Jezreel. Here accordingly the northern and eastern tribes, when advancing to attack the Israelites, were again and again met in battle. Here it was that Barak with the men of Zebulun and Kedesh-Naphtali encountered the hosts of Jabin, king of Hazor, under their captain, Sisera. Coming down from the hills of Galilee, Barak took post on the slopes of Mount Tabor, on the margin of his own mountain land. Sisera's army was already encamped far down in the plain beneath upon the river Kishon—a stream which, winding round the base of Tabor, and flowing westwards through the plain, and swelled by many tributaries, falls into the sea at Carmel. A finer field of battle for Jabin's army, with their nine hundred war-chariots of iron, could not well be conceived. Useless among the hills, they could dash along unpeded in every direction on this noble plain. Encouraged by



the Word of the Lord spoken to him by Deborah the prophetess, and undismayed by the formidable array of the enemy, "Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him." A furious storm had meanwhile come on, for "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The Kishon was in flood, and the hosts of Sisera driven into it by the impetuous onset of Barak, were many of them drowned, while the scattered remnant fled before him and "fell upon the edge of the sword."

Half a century later another memorable conflict was witnessed on this plain. It fell out in the days of Gideon. "All the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the East were gathered together, and went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel." They were evidently quite a different description of force from the army of Jabin. "They lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea-side for multitude." Jabin's was a disciplined host. These were nomadic tribes, gathered together for this inroad under two famous chiefs, Oreb and Zeeb—the *Raven* and the *Wolf*—the very sort of titles, as Stanley remarks, which the chiefs of the Bedouin continue to use to the present day. The valley in which they lay was manifestly the broad hollow between Gilboa and the little Hermon. To meet these plundering hordes, Gideon had summoned together the men of those tribes of Israel whose territories lay around this plain—Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. Having first, with a single follower, stolen down into their camp by night, and ascertained by a remarkable providence the alarm which his very name had already inspired, he adopted immediately thereafter the skilful stratagem by which he threw them into the wildest panic, and turned them, in the midst of the confusion and darkness, into the destroyers of each other. Pell-mell they rushed down eastwards into the Jordan valley, the fiery Gideon at their heels, and never slacking in the hot pursuit till he had seized their kings, and scattered the broken remnant of their host like chaff among the mountains far beyond the limits of Judca.

Later still another battle was fought on this field—that, namely, in which Saul and his brave and noble-hearted son Jonathan were slain. There is something indescribably touching in the story of the unhappy, God-forsaken king leaving his army in disguise at the dead of night, to seek counsel in his sore extremity of the woman at En-dor who had a familiar spirit. *There*, right opposite Jenin, at the distance of three or four miles across the plain, are the hills of Gilboa, on which his army was encamped. The Philistines who had come up in great force from the south, by the way of the sea-coast, to spoil this fertile region, had pitched their tents at Shunem, on the western slopes of the little Hermon, from which their forces would seem to have extended over to “the fountain which is in Jezreel.” In other words, Saul’s army was on the hill above, and that of the Philistines in the valley of Jezreel below. To reach En-dor, which lay on the farther or northern face of the little Hermon, Saul must have passed the left wing of the Philistian army and quite near to it, and hence an additional reason for his going thither by night. On his return from an interview which served only to cast a darker cloud over his troubled mind, the battle was joined. Driven back up the slopes of Gilboa by the fierce attack of the Philistines, Saul’s army was utterly routed; and somewhere on the height of that bare limestone ridge, Saul himself, wounded and in despair, and his sons already slain, fell upon his own sword and died. Bleak and bare,—the yellowish rock looking out every here and there through the scanty and scrubby vegetation that only half covers their naked sides,—these heights seem as if they felt to this day the force of that beautiful and pathetic invocation in which David sought to call down the curse of Heaven upon a scene associated with events so humiliating to Israel, and so saddening to himself: “Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. . . . O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed



for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished !”

By eight A.M. all was ready, and we left Jenin. We were now a numerous and somewhat formidable-looking troop. Our two Turkish friends had a couple of servants. We had our three muleteers besides Gaetano, and a guard of three soldiers furnished by the governor of Jenin. There were, therefore, in our company about a dozen of armed men. As for the members of our own party, none of us carried anything more formidable than a riding-whip. Altogether, and ladies included, we were nearly twenty strong, as we rode down in marching order from the higher ground, where we had passed the night, and began to cross the plain. Before we had advanced into it many hundred yards, our military escort dashed out in front, and galloped hither and thither along the line of our route, as if they had been searching for lurking Bedouin amid the tall wheat which covered everywhere this part of the plain. When we had got to a distance of three or four miles from Jenin, and had begun to skirt along the lower slopes of Gilboa, these valiant troopers reined up, assured us we were now out of all danger, and then putting spurs to their horses rode off at the gallop towards Jenin. In point of fact, the knaves had just brought us to the verge of whatever danger our day's journey might involve ; for the Bedouin seldom approach the sides of the plain which are inhabited by the *Fellahin* or settled peasantry, with whom they are continually at war. The Jenin guard were afraid, no doubt, to adventure themselves any nearer to the enemy's camp. They had begun to descry the black tents and the long-tufted Arab spears peering out in the distance from some hollow in the broad expanse before us ; and hence their sudden retreat. Within half an hour after they disappeared, one of the Arabs approached us—a regular son of the desert, clad in the usual broad-striped cloak, and belted with the leathern-girdle of the Bedouin ; his head covered with the kefiéh of red and yellow silk, with the customary

camel-hair rope twisted not ungracefully round it—the kefiéh being so fastened under the chin as to leave little more of his sunburned visage than the piercing black eyes, hooked nose, and black bushy beard to be seen. He was mounted on an active sinewy little Arab horse, his long spear reclining on his shoulder, and a brace of heavy pistols in his belt.

He offered his services to guide us across the plain, which we at once accepted. A mile or two farther on we passed, at a little distance on our right, the remains of the ancient Jezreel. Its modern name is Zerín. It is common, it appears, with the Arabs to substitute *n* for *l* at the end of a word—turning, for example, Bethel into Beitín. Having respect to this Arabic modification of the name, it will be seen that Zerín is substantially identical with Jezreel. It is now a little hamlet of twenty houses, but there are still lying around it fragments of sculptured sarcophagi and other traces of its ancient importance. What a crowd of Scripture memories does this place recall! Here was the royal residence of Ahab; and there, far down at the western extremity of the beautiful plain, is Carmel, from which Ahab drove in such haste at Elijah's bidding, lest the coming rain, by turning the softened clay of the plain into an impassable mire, should hinder his return to Jezreel. Here, in the outskirts of the ancient city, was that vineyard of the murdered Naboth, where the stern prophet met Ahab and Jezebel his wife, and uttered these terrible words—"Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (1 Kings xxi. 19). There is a tower in Jezreel to this day—the only building of any note in it—and though not the ancient one, it served at least to remind us of the graphic incident which occurred in the days of Ahab's son and successor, Joram, and which the sacred historian thus describes—"And there stood a watchman on the tower of Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company." As the company approaches, the watchman again says to the uneasy Joram—"The driving is like the driving of

Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously." The lie of the country well explains all this. It is so open that the advancing charioteer could be seen miles away; and it is so smooth that the fiery Jehu, hasting to execute his mission of vengeance, might here indulge to the utmost his passion for speed. Not far from this spot the winged arrow of Jehu overtook the flying king, and shot him through the heart; the son of Ahab thus perishing as miserably as his impious father had done before him. On the same occasion it was that Ahaziah, the king of Judah, Joram's friend and ally, when he saw what Jehu had done, "fled by the way of the garden-house." *Beth-gan*, "the house of the garden," was probably the same as *En-gannim*, "the spring of the gardens." The prefixes are such as might most naturally be interchanged, and the topography strongly supports the supposition that the king fled by the way of the modern Jenin. If so, and there is great probability on its side, he was flying southwards in the direction of his own land. The curse that fell so justly on Ahab's house, seems to rest still on Jezreel.

When we had got about half-way across this great plain, it was resolved to halt for an hour. We dismounted, accordingly, and sat down among the long grass, and talked together of the many interesting associations which the scenery around us recalled. While thus employed, it became evident that the muleteers were becoming very ill at ease, and that Gaetano, in particular, was getting into a state of great excitement. "What is the matter?" we inquired. "The matter?" they answered with one voice; "there is the matter—the Bedouin, the Bedouin." "What about them," we said, "they wont meddle with us?" Gaetano was in despair. He dashed his gun to the ground, exclaimed that we were mad to be staying in such a place with these wild Arabs all around us, and that we should all be inevitably killed. Though not in the least sympathizing in the poor fellow's terror, we agreed to move on, and orders were given accordingly to reload the baggage animals. This process had just been completed, and I was in the act of tightening the saddle-girths

of my wife's horse in preparation for remounting her, when the sound of horses' feet, galloping furiously and close at hand, was suddenly heard. As I looked over my shoulder to see what it was, an Arab, with his lance levelled, rushed past me, within half a yard, followed by two others with their long guns at their shoulders, and riding at the same furious pace. Having dashed in this mad style through the very midst of our company, they immediately reined up their horses, and rode back into the midst of our somewhat astonished group. Their leader, some sort of inferior sheikh, was immediately accosted by Mr. Brown, who asked him quietly who they were, and what they wanted. All at once they assumed an air of great humility; assured us they meant no harm—that they were poor people—that this was their country we were passing through, and that they hoped we should give them a *buksheesh*. To what cause their change of manner and their perfect civility were to be ascribed, we were at a loss at the moment to say. It might be, we thought, that they had found us more numerous than they had supposed us to be before they came up, and considered it rather too formidable an affair to attempt to rob us. Our Turkish friends were still in our company, and, with their attendants, had closed up beside us when the Arabs appeared. At the same time, when we began to look around us, it was easy to see that if it had come to fighting, we should have stood but a sorry chance. Within less than half a mile around us, at least a hundred of their comrades were in sight, and hundreds upon hundreds more in the distance. It was, in fact, the season of the year at which the Bedouin come across the Jordan, and virtually take possession of this great plain. Here they remain for several months, driving their flocks at will over these luxuriant pastures, staying long enough to sow and reap a little corn of their own, and to eat up a great deal more of what has been sown by the Fellahin near the sides of the plain.

It was not till we reached Nazareth, some hours afterwards, that we received the information which led us to trace our

safety not so much to our number as to the presence of the swarthy Bedouin whom we had engaged as a guide. At the time, indeed, we were a good deal struck with what this fellow said. When Mr. Brown had given the party who rushed upon us with so threatening an air some twelve or fifteen piastres, and had sent them away, he turned to our Arab and asked him if he had done right in giving these men anything? His answer was to this effect—that as they had simply begged the money as a favour, there was nothing wrong in giving it. “And what,” continued Mr. Brown, “if they had demanded it, and had threatened to use force if their request should be refused?” “In that case,” said our guide, “I should have shot their leader dead upon the spot.”

We laughed when Mr. Brown, immediately afterwards, interpreted this conversation to us; and set down the Arab's grand speech as a piece of gasconade, intended to magnify himself and his services in our eyes, and thereby to insure a better reward. On telling the whole story, however, to the German agents at Nazareth of the English Church Missionary Society, they gave us to believe that what the fellow threatened he was exceedingly likely, in the supposed case, to have done. To make this intelligible, they explained under what sort of surveillance the Arabs in the plain were at that moment placed. The plain was under the jurisdiction of a chief named Akil, formerly a notorious freebooter, but whom the Turkish government had recently taken into their service. His business was to maintain order in the district, and to protect travellers.

To enable him to execute this commission, he had under his command a body of Turkish soldiers, and, in addition to these, he had his own tribe of which he was the hereditary chief, and who, of course, were ready to follow wherever he led. One way and another he could count on six or seven hundred men to back him, in case the other Arabs should prove refractory. This force, aided by his official authority and well-known personal daring, generally secured submission, though in spite of all his

vigilance, robberies were not unfrequently committed. The Arabs were not fond of exposing themselves to his displeasure, knowing, as they well did, that if he discovered the offenders, they were sure of summary and stern punishment. From our description of the Arab whom we had luckily engaged as a guide, the Nazareth missionaries, who knew Akil personally and were well acquainted with his people, had little doubt that he was a Howara, one of Akil's own tribe, and that in his presence the other Arabs would not dare to commit an act of violence. Had they done so, or even threatened to do it, the missionaries were of opinion that our guide would have shot the leader of our assailants, and that he would have been rewarded by Akil for so doing. Happily for us, the occasion for putting this theory to the test did not arise.

The same gentlemen at Nazareth who gave us this curious information also told us that two travellers, whom we had met the week before at Jerusalem, had been robbed, at the very place where our adventure occurred, on the previous day. These travellers were the Rev. Mr. Arthur, the well-known and estimable author of *The Successful Merchant* and of the *Tongue of Fire*, and Mrs. Arthur, his wife. The missionaries, to whom Mr. Arthur reported the occurrence on their arrival at Nazareth, had been down in the plain on the morning of the same day we crossed it, and had told Akil of the robbery. The Arab chief expressed to them his strong conviction that the robbery had not been committed by any of the Arabs, but by some of the people of Jenin. In point of fact, this had been the conviction of the Arthurs themselves, though Akil was not aware of it, and had arrived at the conclusion simply from the account the Arthurs had given of the appearance of the men who did the deed. Mrs. A., in particular, had told the missionaries she felt quite sure of having seen at least one of them along with the Governor of Jenin, when he came to visit them at their tent on the night previous to the robbery. The Jenin governor, it seems, had told them that a guard was quite unnecessary in

crossing the plain, though they, with their servant, were a party of only three; and yet he found it quite necessary that we should have a guard though we numbered about twenty. He could manage to rob them, and therefore sent them off alone. Not thinking it safe to meddle with us he gave us a guard, pocketed the hire, and having thus made all he could out of us, probably desired his men to take care of themselves, and leave us in the lurch.

It may not be without its use to record this incident, as it may possibly put some other traveller on his guard as to the measure of reliance to be placed on the governor and people of Jenin, of whom we had certainly no cause to form any other than a most unfavourable opinion. As regards Akil Aga himself, though, from all we heard of him, he seems to keep tolerably good order among those that are under him, he appears to have no very great respect for the authority of his own superiors.

Not many weeks before we passed through his territory, a new Aga had been sent by the Pasha of Damascus to supersede him and take his place. Instead of quietly submitting to be deposed, the fierce chief mustered his people, crossed the country to the neighbourhood of the Sea of Tiberias, where he met his intended successor, attacked him on the instant, slew, it is said, about eighty or ninety of his men, and killed the new Aga himself; and having performed this exploit, and carried off all the property of the defeated party as a spoil, he returned quietly to his post in the plain of Jezreel. The government was too feeble to avenge the atrocity, and he is still in their service.

At a little before two P.M. we reached the north side of the plain, and climbed up immediately the steep and rocky face of the range of hills which here springs up from it like a wall. Having reached by this sharp ascent an elevation of perhaps a thousand feet, we found the rugged path turning a little to the left, and conducting us into a lonely upland valley which led us onward and upward for about two miles. At the head of this narrow valley, or rather ravine, the path turned to the right, among

the hill tops. After riding a mile or more in this direction—that is eastwards—and still ascending as we advanced, we came to the edge of a sequestered hollow inclosed all round by the encircling hills. It was green as an emerald, being watered by several fountains and streams. Rich pastures and waving corn-fields clothed it from side to side, presenting a striking contrast to the shelving white limestone rocks and brown sombre hills within whose lap this quiet hollow lay. And there, on the margin of this little plain, close in at the base of the hill on its north-western side, our eyes lighted all at once upon Nazareth. Impatient to enter it, we pushed rapidly on, passing as we approached it the so-called Well of the Annunciation, where, according to one of the traditions of the place, the angel appeared to Mary to tell her of that mystery of mysteries which has made her “blessed among women.” It is the chief well or fountain of Nazareth; and many of the females of the place were gathered around it as we rode past, filling their pitchers with its waters, and bearing them away home on their heads.

We had been recommended to lodge at the “Casa Nuova,” a large detached building belonging to the Latin convent, and which is set apart for the reception of travellers. After waiting for some time at its massive door, a monk at length arrived from the convent bearing the key, and immediately admitted us. Our baggage was deposited in the ample court, within which we ourselves were led up stairs by the monk to the apartments that were to be assigned us. The house was clean and cool, the furniture plain but good, and the accommodation ample for all our party. We were truly glad to have found so comfortable a place in which to pass the night, and the rather that the perfect security in which it placed our goods and chattels left us free to roam about Nazareth without the least solicitude regarding them. The monk having presented us with lemonade, and having placed a servant at our disposal to put the sleeping apartments in order and to arrange our dinner table, withdrew to his convent, and left us in possession of the house.

CHAPTER IX.

Nazareth—Its population, traditions, and environs—Panoramic view from the hill above it—Visit to Mount Tabor—Cross the country from Tabor to Tiberias—In danger of losing our way—The Sea of Galilee—A voyage on its waters—A “great storm of wind upon the lake”—A night with the Arabs in “a desert place”—The plain of Gennesaret, Magdala, Capernaum, &c., &c.—The town of Safed—The plain of the Hûleh and Lake Merom—Dan—A Sabbath at Banias, beneath Mount Hermon, and beside the sources of the Jordan—Remains of Cesarea-Philippi—Scene of the Transfiguration, &c.—Cross the shoulder of Hermon—Descend the river Jenâny—Encamp at Kefr-Howar—The plain and city of Damascus.

NAZARETH is, on the whole, well built; and its people are in apparently comfortable circumstances—well dressed, and more civil than the inhabitants of most Syrian towns. The fact that they are chiefly Christians, no doubt explains this better condition of their manners and affairs. They number from three to four thousand; of whom, not quite so many as seven hundred are Moslems. The Christians are of the Greek, Greek Catholic, Latin, and Maronite Churches—the first named being much the most numerous. Allusion has been already made to the well outside the town, as being, according to the tradition of the Greek Church, the scene of the annunciation. There seems not much inherent probability in the supposition that so solemn and momentous an interview should have taken place at a public well. Scripture is wholly silent as to the particular place. It is known that no Christians resided in Nazareth till the time of Constantine, and that it did not become a place of Christian pilgrimage till the sixth century—facts which make it all but impossible that any reliable tradition connected with the scenes

of our Saviour's history in this place could have been handed down to after times. The Greek Church have built a small chapel over the well, and of course claim the scene of the annunciation as their own. The Latins, on the other hand, are not less confident that the annunciation took place in a grotto, which they are quite ready to show you, beneath the entrance into the church of the Latin convent. It is encased in marble, and hung with silver lamps; and the monks will point you out the very column, supporting the roof of the grotto, from behind which the angel came forth when he appeared to the Virgin. From this grotto you ascend by a flight of steps into another cave, which was the Virgin's kitchen, and of which the fire-place and chimney still remain. As for the Virgin's house itself, every one knows, that to escape from the polluting touch of the Saracen infidels, it long ago took flight bodily from Nazareth, and crossed the seas; first to Dalmatia, and then to Italy, in which it finally settled at Loretto! These are the things to disgust one with so-called holy places. They illustrate nothing but human credulity and dishonesty. We had neither time nor inclination to waste upon them at Nazareth. Enough to know that here stood the town in which our Lord lived for nearly thirty years. Fain, indeed, would we know something of the details of those memorable years. Gladly would we obtain a glimpse of the interior of that humble but honoured household, where the mysterious child whom Joseph and Mary brought hither from Egypt, "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man." We love to think of Him following his mother to that well in the outskirts of the town, which was no doubt, then, as it is still to the Nazarenes, the chief place for drawing water for household use. We love, too, to think of Him as gathering, with the innocent delight peculiar to childhood, those many flowers in which the fields and hill-sides around Nazareth so remarkably abound, and from which, in after years, he drew that simple and touching imagery, which so often gave equal point and beauty to His divine discourse. But more than all do we love

to think how, as childhood gave place to youth, and youth to manhood's maturer age, the heavenly wisdom, and goodness, and holiness that filled His soul, must have shone forth in His daily life. How the children of this Nazareth, with whom in His earlier years He associated, must have been won by His gentleness. How the young with whom He mingled in His own youthful years, must have been at once softened and solemnized by his unselfish, loving, generous, and yet grave and thoughtful spirit. How the rude men with whom, at a still later period, He came into daily contact while prosecuting the labours of His humble earthly calling, or while performing the common but kindly offices of neighbourhood, must have been awed, in spite of themselves, in His presence, by the moral elevation of His character, and by the piety and benignity that beamed in His every look, and breathed in His every word. And how, once more, His very mother herself, and her husband Joseph, must often have looked on in silent wonder and reverence while contemplating in one who was "subject unto them;" a childhood in which no folly or petulance ever had a place; a youth unstained by even one solitary indiscretion; a manhood whose every aim, and desire, and thought, were holy, and just, and good—in one word, a life in which, through all its successive stages, they beheld God's will done on earth as it is done in heaven!

It has seemed good, however, to the Only Wise not to indulge this curiosity, however natural or even becoming it may appear. He was to be called a Nazarene; and the lowly and despised obscurity which that name implied was not to be broken in upon by suffering the light even of sacred history to fall on this period of His life. It is impossible, however, that the thought of these thirty years should not lend an indescribable interest to the scenes amid which they were spent. It needs not to say, therefore, with what eagerness we hastened forth from the *Casa Nuova* to visit them. After a general survey of the town itself, we struck into one of the rocky ravines behind

it, and clambering up its steep and slippery sides, we made our way to the summit of the hill above. This hill rises to the height of fully 400 feet above the town, and affords one of the grandest, most extensive, and interesting views in all Judea. There is a little *wely*, or tomb, on the very apex of the hill, standing on the dome-roof of which, we could survey, in one glorious landscape, the whole country, from the hills about Jerusalem on the south, to the snowy Hermon at the head of the Jordan valley, on the north; from the Haurân, far away beyond Jordan, on the east, to the Mediterranean on the west, whose blue waters faded away on the distant horizon, twenty or thirty miles out at sea.

The country immediately to the north of the hill on which we stood is exceedingly beautiful. It is the interior of Galilee. Almost at our feet lay a noble, spacious, and far extending valley, surrounded by hills of the richest green, their sides finely wooded, their summits blending into other ranges of endlessly varied outline beyond them. The valley itself was full of fine pastures, and corn-fields, while every here and there its surface was broken by picturesque knolls, crowned with clumps of trees, and by little spurs from the hills shooting out upon the level ground, and forming a multitude of most enchanting bay-like recesses around them. Across this broad valley, or rather plain, towards the north-west, stands Sefûrieh, the ancient Sepphoris; and three or four miles to the north of it, Kana-el-Jelil, which is now regarded as the true Cana of Galilee. Till recently, that scene of our Saviour's first miracle had been identified with Kefr Kenna, a village about two miles to the north-east of Nazareth, not far off the common route to Tiberias. This country reaching to the sea-coast westwards, and including, on the south, the great plain of Esdraelon, or Jezreel, was the territory assigned to the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar, of whom it was said—"They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand." In the

great battle with the hosts of Sisera, it was the reproach of Asher, Zebulun's neighbour to the north-west, that he "continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his breaches," or *creeks*, while Zebulun himself, and Naphtali, that dwelt beyond him on the north, were jeoparding "their lives unto the death in the high places of the field."

After descending from this noble point of view, we examined several of the many cliffs, along the brow of which a portion of Nazareth is built, trying to form an opinion as to which of them might be the true "Mount of Precipitation," from which the Nazarenes impiously sought to cast the Saviour down. There are several that answer quite sufficiently to the Scripture narrative, but the only definite conclusion at which we arrived was this, that the *traditional* cliff could not have been the scene of that attempted crime. It is above the city—not beneath it, as the Scripture narrative requires. It was not till night had fallen, and we could see no more, that we returned to the *Casa Nuova*, where we were joined at dinner by Mr. Zeller and Mr. Hubert, of the Church of England Missionary Society, and from whom we received, in the course of the evening, that information about Akil and his Arabs, and about the robbery of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur, to which reference has been already made. The mission, of which those gentlemen and another associate have the charge, combines,—with its main object of making known the gospel,—an attempt to promote among the people of Nazareth a better knowledge of some of the arts of civilized life, and, in particular, of mechanics and agriculture. Our limited stay at Nazareth left us no time to examine their operations either in the one department or in the other. They were evidently men well qualified for the important work in which they were engaged; but like most of the other missionaries we met with in Judea, they were contending with very formidable difficulties, and with manifold discouragements. One of our party, whose years disabled him from prosecuting any further a journey so fatiguing, resolved to leave us here, and to go down to the sea coast at Haifa,

in the Bay of Acre. Mr. Zeller kindly undertook to conduct him to that place, where, by the aid of the British consul, as we afterwards found, he procured an Arab boat, and rejoined the yacht at Beyrout.

At forty minutes past nine A.M. on Wednesday, the 6th May, we left Nazareth. Our destination was Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee; and we had sent off an hour before, and by the shortest road to that place, two of the mukharis and Gaetano with our tents and baggage. As we intended ourselves to travel by a different road which would enable us to visit Mount Tabor, we took the chief mukhari, Ahmed, along with us to be our guide. The country between Nazareth and Tiberias is generally considered to be somewhat unsafe, except for travellers who are well armed. Happily, however, we were none of us haunted with any fears on that score. There was not a single weapon of any sort in all our company save the gun carried by one of the Nazareth people, whom we engaged to accompany us as far as Tabor. The road we took after crossing the little basin in which Nazareth lies, wound up the hills on its eastern side, and conducted us in the same direction over many heights and hollows, and all the while in the heart of the hills, for about an hour. All through these uplands, oats were everywhere to be seen growing wild—most fit emblem of the stony-ground hearers—for there was no corn in the ear. When shall there wave on the top of these mountains even an handful of that better corn, the fruit whereof shall shake like Lebanon! As we came nearer to Tabor, whose broad summit had been appearing every now and then through some southward opening of the hills, we entered a fine oak forest, at the farther side of which we found ourselves looking down a wooded valley which opened out upon the plain. On the eastern side of this romantic valley, a projecting spur from the Galilean range of hills runs right out to Tabor, and merges into it at a height of three or four hundred feet above the level of the plain at the valley's mouth. This valley, which reaches far back among the hills, collects into it the waters that

COUNTRY AROUND NAZARETH, TABOR, AND THE SEA OF GALILEE



form the main stream of the Kishon. Nothing can be more picturesque than the aspect of Tabor as seen from the point of view at which we had now arrived. As seen from the west in crossing the plain of Jezreel, it is the narrow and naked end of the hill that meets the eye, springing sharply up from the smooth expanse before it. As seen from the north, it is its broad side, clothed from base to summit with many tinted woods, that faces us, and with the exquisitely varied foreground between, of the opening valley at whose mouth it stands. On the margin of the plain, and close to the entrance of the valley, is the village of Debûrieh—marking the site, and preserving in its name a memorial of the ancient Daberath, one of the cities granted to the Levites in the territory of Issachar.

Our ride from Nazareth, the greater part of which was over very rough and rocky ground, occupied the better part of two hours. It was near twelve o'clock when we began the ascent of Tabor. The north face of the hill is considerably less steep than any of the other three sides, which drop down all but precipitously upon the plain. Upon the north, as already explained, it is connected with the adjacent hills of Galilee by the beautifully wooded ridge that forms the east side of the valley by which we approached it. Above the point at which this ridge touches the mount, a series of zig-zag paths enable those who are so disposed to ride up, without dismounting, to the very summit—no doubt the very paths which led up in ancient times to the town which stood upon it, and of whose walls and fortifications extensive remains exist to this day. The top of the hill is about half a mile in length, and about a quarter of a mile in breadth, save towards its western extremity, where it narrows to not more than a hundred yards. From this point there is a magnificent view of the whole plain of Esdraelon, or Jezreel. From this western extremity of the top of Tabor, we looked over to Sölem, the ancient Shunem, on the western slope of the little Hermon.

It was that the good Shunammite lived who prepared a
 her for the prophet Elisha. A little nearer us, and on the



northern slope of the same hill, is the village of Nain, where our Lord restored to life the widow's son. By the help of the good glass we carried along with us, we could descry every tree and bush, every rock and ruin, about both of these interesting places. Beyond Nain eastwards, and at no great distance from it, the site of En-dor was pointed out, where Saul came to visit the woman who had a familiar spirit. The sea is not in sight from Tabor. By a slight curve in the Galilee range of hills, they overlap in the distance the range of Carmel, so as on the west entirely to shut in the plain. Owing partly to the great extent of the plateau on the top of Tabor, and partly to the circumstance of its being covered in most places with dense thickets of dwarf oaks and other trees, it is impossible from any one part of it to see all round the hill. Upon this plateau there is a beautiful open space, carpeted with rich grass and bestrewed with wild flowers, and all but completely encircled by a broad belt of wood. This sheltered and most attractive inclosure is towards the east end of the summit of the hill, and all around it there are massive remains of walls, and bastions, and vaults—amply sufficient to show how strongly the hill was fortified in ancient times, and to explain the fact which Josephus relates, that Placidus, one of Vespasian's generals, who was sent to seize it, found the enterprise too hard for him, though he at length gained by fraud what he was unable to take by force. The fact that this town existed on the summit of Tabor in the times of our Lord, and that there was another town upon its base, is of itself sufficient to shake all confidence in the tradition which placed on this hill the scene of the transfiguration. To have taken the disciples to Tabor, would not certainly have been to take them to "a hill apart"—a hill where they should be alone. Of the true scene of the transfiguration, I shall have occasion afterwards to speak. Among the ruins already spoken of, a few natives still live, one of whom accompanied us to a point at the south-eastern angle of the summit of the hill, where the finest view is obtained of the whole country to the north, east,

and south. East from Tabor there spreads out what may be called the continuation of the plain of Jezreel. That plain passing out, as formerly described, in two arms—the one arm between Tabor and the little Hermon, and the other and broader arm between that hill and Gilboa—stretches away onwards to the valley of the Jordan. Seen from the height of Tabor, it has the aspect of a nearly level country, though, in point of fact, as we found in crossing it the same afternoon, it is full of undulations quite sufficient to hide the distance, and to make it very easy to lose one's way. The whole of this extensive tract of country was covered with the richest verdure; bare as to trees, but clothed all over with strong vegetation—partly corn crop, partly grass, and partly, or rather chiefly rank weeds and thistles. This broad expanse of green seems as if, along its eastern margin, it joined on to the rugged mountainous country of Gilead and Bashan beyond it. The Ghor, or Jordan valley, at which it really terminates, is entirely hidden in its own deep hollow. Tabor, the little Hermon, and Gilboa, stand upon the watershed between the Mediterranean and the Jordan valley. The Kishon, issuing into the plain at the north-western base of Tabor, falls into the sea at Carmel. Another water-course which descends from the hills of Galilee immediately to the north-east of Tabor, makes its way in a south-easterly direction to the Jordan. It is across this country on which Tabor thus looks down, that Captain Allen, as noticed in an earlier chapter, would fain have his canal dug from the Bay of Acre, in order to let back the sea into what he holds to have been its ancient bed in the Jordan valley. Happily, there are too many difficulties—physical, political, and financial—to leave any chance for his barbarous proposal of drowning 2000 square miles of the most interesting historical country in the world, in order to find a shorter water-way to India. From Tabor an immense stretch of the hill country, that runs along the eastern side of the Jordan is visible. Beginning at the great Hermon, with its snowy summits at the head of the Jordan valley, far away in the north-east, the eye ranges south-



wards along the hills of Bashan to a point, nearly due east from Tabor, where they are rent by a deep rugged chasm which descends into the Jordan valley. That chasm is the wild mountain valley down which flows the Sheri'at-el-Mandhûr, the Hieromax of the Greeks, and the Jarmuk of the Jews—the river that divided Bashan from Gilead. Southward from this deep cleft, the mountains of Gilead continue their course down the eastern side of the Jordan valley, till again they are cleft about half-way between the Lake of Tiberias and the Dead Sea by the Wady Zurka,—the bed of the ancient Jabbok,—near to which Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord, and which formed the boundary between Gilead and Canaan. The whole length of this mountain-wall was full in view from Tabor.

About half-way between Tabor and the great Hermon, the corner of a lake was seen gleaming brightly out from the base of the brown hills that rose beyond it. It was the northern extremity of the Lake of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee, by far the greater part of which was hidden behind the high ground that lines its western shores. Some miles to the west of the lake, a conspicuous hill with two peaks, one at each end, rose above the green waving country to the south of it. It was the traditional Mount of the Beatitudes, known by the name of the Horns of Hattin. It was near that hill that in the year 1187, the Crusaders sustained that terrible and fatal defeat by the Sultan Saladin, in which the Frank King of Jerusalem and the Grand Master of the Knights Templars were taken captive, and in which their army was so utterly broken and destroyed, that only a few knights, who cut their way through the enemy's lines, escaped to the sea-coast at Acre.

At the foot of that same hill, too, it was that the late bloody fight, already alluded to, between Akil Aga and his intended successor, took place. The fact of such a battle having been fought only a few weeks before our arrival in this district, had contributed to increase the alarm of travellers by creating a feeling of insecurity. In reality, it had, perhaps, made travelling safer for

Europeans than it was before. Certain it is that, entirely unarmed though we were, we met, in riding through that wild country, and all round Tiberias, with as little molestation as if we had been in the Highlands of Scotland.

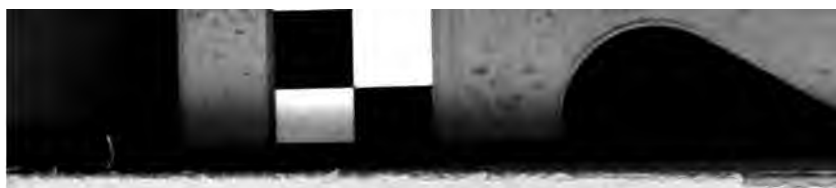
It was impossible to look across the open featureless rolling expanse that lay between Tabor and Tiberias, without perceiving what risk there would be of losing our road. Our guide from Nazareth was to leave us after we descended the hill, and having no great confidence in the local knowledge of Ahmed, I was at some pains to acquire as accurate a notion of our route as possible, while we were yet on the summit of Tabor. The native who had joined us seemed to know the country well. When interrogated, through our interpreter, as to our proper line of march, he pointed to an immense herd of black buffaloes that were feeding far out on the face of the comparatively level country before us. Our route, he said, lay quite close to these cattle. Two things as the result of this conversation were settled in my mind, and they proved of no small importance in the issue—*first*, that our course must be as nearly as possible north-east; and, *second*, that we must keep a sharp look-out for the buffalo herd.

Soon after two P.M. we left this enchanting height, and driving our horses before us, made our way down through the woods to that lower ridge from which we had ascended the mount. About three o'clock we remounted our horses, rode across the lower ridge eastwards, and descended on its farther side through a long succession of forest glades and beautifully wooded hollows, forming altogether as lovely a piece of scenery as could well be conceived. At half-past four we emerged from these roots of the hills into the open country beyond, and shortly thereafter came to the Khan-et-Tujar, an immense square fortress-like structure, with strong towers at the angles. It was built in the sixteenth century for the protection of travellers trading between Damascus and Egypt. There is a sort of periodical fair or market held alongside of it still, at which the Arabs buy such things as they



need from the people of Nazareth, and sell their own spoil and their spare cattle. Here our Nazareth guide was to leave us, and we paid and dismissed him accordingly. Ahmed, meanwhile, was riding on a-head along a narrow path, through alternate cornfields and wildernesses of thistles, the latter as thick as a jungle, and four or five feet in height. To ride single file on such a path was indispensable; and the head of the party being sometimes half a mile in front of the rear, it was no easy matter when any difficulty arose to get all to close up for a conference. A necessity for doing so, however, very soon arose. From the head of the line, where I was following close at Ahmed's heels to keep an eye on his movements, I heard all at once a great noise in the distance behind. It was our Nazareth guide who was galloping after us, and shouting at the top of his voice. On riding back to learn what had happened, I found him talking earnestly to Mr. Brown. "What does he want?" I inquired. "He says," Mr. Brown replied, "that we are quite off the road; but I don't believe a word he says." "Why not?" "Because when he left us a short while ago, he assured me this was the right road, and that we need be under no anxiety, as he was sure Ahmed knew quite well how to go." "But why, then, should he ride after us now, and tell us we are going wrong?" "O, no doubt he wants to be re-engaged, and taken with us to Tiberias!" Having taken up this not unnatural impression, Mr. Brown would not listen to him, and told him peremptorily to be gone. I was not satisfied as to the correctness of this theory. There was something about the man's look and manner which I could not reconcile with it. He continued riding after us, gesticulating and remonstrating with great vehemence, for fully a mile. At length giving up, apparently in despair, the attempt to put us right, he wheeled about and went his own way. Geography was not the *forte* of Mr. Brown; and since the day of our journey to Jenin, I had ceased to place much reliance on the guidance of Ahmed. He on his side, meanwhile, was quite as confident as Mr. Brown that all was right, and pushed steadily

on, pointing along the path every now and then, and shouting "Tiberiyah!" On therefore we went, though very distrustfully, so far as I was concerned. Amid the swelling undulations of the country around us, we had, meanwhile, completely lost sight of our only landmark—the horned hill of Hattin. It was now half-past five o'clock. The sun, therefore, it was plain, must be now nearly in the west, and our shadows at the same time showed that the course we were pursuing was inclining to the south of east. From the bearings of the country I had taken on Tabor, I knew that such a course must infallibly carry us into the Ghor, many miles south of the Sea of Tiberias, where there is no human habitation, no shelter but the rocks, and no inhabitants but some of the most lawless of the Arab tribes. My mind was made up. I struck off to the north, at right angles to the path we had been hitherto pursuing. Ahmed exclaimed and protested, and Mr. Brown did the same; but it was of no use, and soon all followed. Many a tangled brake of tall thistles we traversed, and many a corn-field. Leading the way, and careful about nothing but keeping the sun on my left hand, after we had ridden in this direction for several miles, first Hattin began to raise its horns once more above the horizon, and soon after, to my great joy, the herd of buffaloes appeared in a hollow at no great distance before us. Shouting to the sulky Ahmed, who was following behind, I pointed to the cattle. The effect was instantaneous. He had heard the Tabor man's statement as to our road passing near them. He cantered up immediately to the front, and I had my triumph. A little farther on we fell into the road we were looking for—a broad, well-defined track, altogether unlike the hardly distinguishable path we had left. This road soon after brought us to the small hamlet of Kefr-Sabt, built on the side of a deep ravine, from the brow of which, and looking across the deep hollow beneath, and away up the long sloping hill beyond it, he pointed out, at a distance of four or five miles, the precise point in the horizon where our road would be found to drop right down upon Tiberias. Our anxieties were



now at an end, and the remainder of our ride was one of complete enjoyment.

The evening was beautiful, and we were all most eager to reach the height above Tiberias before the light of day should have faded from the landscape. With this view, and after scrambling down the steep descent beneath Kefr-Sabt, we crossed the broad valley—the Wady-Besûm—at the gallop, and held on at a smart pace till the long pull up the opposite hill-side compelled us to draw bridle and slacken our speed. The sun had been set half an hour when we gained the top of the ridge; but the moon, within three days of the full, was just appearing in the east, over the dark and rugged wall of the mountains of the Jaulân, the ancient Golan; while at our very feet, but far down beneath us, at the bottom of a deep gulf, the Sea of Tiberias glimmered up through the dark shadows in which it lay buried. So long as we stood on the hill-top, the light, which had not yet faded from the western sky, enabled us to see well enough around us. But the moment we began to descend the eastern face of the hill, we passed at once into the realm of night. A bend of the hill left the ravine by which we descended without a ray of the rising moon's light, and we had to grope our way down on foot among rocks and stones, the bridles of my wife's and my own horse in one hand, and herself in the other. About eight o'clock we reached our tents, which the servants had already pitched on the north side of Tiberias, immediately outside the walls, and within fifty yards of the lake. Two hours later, when all was still about the tents, Mr. S—— and I stole away down to the beach, and in the glorious moonlight made our first acquaintance with the waters of the Galilean sea. And what a sight it was to look up from the bosom of the placid lake upon the encircling hills, and nearer at hand on the city of Herod Antipas—its massive walls and flanking towers shattered by a recent earthquake, and hanging over the sea as if about to drop into its waves! But more impressive and soul-stirring by far than the mere natural solemnity and mournful beauty of this moonlight scene, was the thought that upon these

very waters Christ had walked on that memorable night when, coming to His disciples through the storm and tempest in which they were involved, He uttered these gracious words, "It is I; be not afraid." What Christian could fail, where we were, to hear the echo of these words sounding across the waters still, and sending a sweet and precious calm into his inmost heart!

At an early hour next morning we made a general survey of the lake from a height above the town. The lake is from twelve to fourteen miles in length; its average breadth is about six miles; but at its widest part, which is opposite the plain of Gennesaret, the breadth cannot be less than seven or eight miles. It narrows towards the south end where the Jordan leaves it. Tiberias stands on the western side of the lake, about four miles from its southern extremity. The lake may be described, in a general way, as lying in a deep basin, inclosed by the hills of Galilee on the west, and by those of Bashan on the east. Its western side forms an irregular curve, somewhat in the shoulder-of-mutton shape; its eastern side is nearly a straight line. The hills on its eastern side rise up, for the most part, like a wall from the very margin of the lake. On the western side their rise is less abrupt, save in the neighbourhood of Tiberias, where, for several miles north and south, they also approach very close to the beach. Tiberias is situated upon a bend of the lake where the hills retire a little, and leave a space between them and the shore of a mile and a half in length, and about a third of a mile in breadth. On this somewhat rugged little plateau, Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist, built the city of Tiberias—so called in honour of his patron, the Roman emperor—about sixteen years after the birth of Christ. Of that ancient city remains are still to be seen, in the shape of large hewn stones and broken columns strewed along the margin of the lake, and even beneath its waters immediately to the south of the present town, which occupies the northern part of the level ground. About the middle of the second century Tiberias became the seat of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and has ever since been



regarded by the Jews as one of the four holy cities of Palestine—the other three being Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safed. The tombs of some of the greatest doctors of their law lie among the roots of the hill at the back of the town: and among these the tombs of the famous Rabbi Zacharias, the author of the *Gemara*, or Jerusalem Talmud, and of Rabbi Judah Hakkodesh, the compiler of the *Mishna*. At the present day there are from 800 to 1000 Jews in Tiberias, constituting about one-half of the entire population. The modern town is little better than a village. It owes all that is imposing in its aspect to the walls and towers which surround it, but which, though not more than a century old, are little better than shapeless ruins. The great earthquake of 1837 has every here and there rent them asunder, and opened great breaches through them, so that they now present a picture of utter desolation. There is a *Locanda*, or inn, in Tiberias, kept by a Jew, but only those travellers who are unprovided with tents will think of housing themselves in a town where, according to the common saying of the Arabs themselves, the king of the fleas keeps his court.

Nothing strikes one more in casting one's eyes over this noble lake than its aspect of perfect loneliness. With the exception of Tiberias itself, and the wretched little hamlet of Mejdél, about four miles farther north, there is not a solitary human habitation all round its once busy and populous shores. In the time of our Saviour it was one of the most thickly inhabited districts in the whole land of Judea. Apart from the princely city of Tiberias itself, the entire circuit of the Sea of Galilee was studded with towns. On its western and northern shores Magdala, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Bethsaida-Julias, succeeded one another at distances, each from its nearest neighbour, of not more than a couple of miles. On its eastern side were Gamala and Hippos; while Tarichea, Scythopolis, Pella, Gadara, and many other places of importance clustered around its southern shores. It was no doubt chiefly by this very populousness of the country around the Sea of Galilee that Jesus was attracted towards it,

and induced to spend upon its shores so large a portion of the three memorable years of His personal ministry. It is probable, indeed, that the additional fact of its being the great thoroughfare of commerce between Syria and Egypt may have presented an additional reason for selecting it as His chief field of labour. It was a central position, from which some knowledge of Himself and of His doctrines might spread east and west, so as at least to prepare the way for the subsequent preaching of the apostles when they should be commissioned to go forth to the Gentiles. Galilee of the Gentiles—Galilee so much pervaded by Gentile influence, and through which a stream of Gentile people was continually flowing—was peculiarly fitted for the beginning of that great gospel mission that was destined ultimately to embrace all kindreds and tongues, from the rising to the setting sun.

But what a contrast between the stir and bustle of those scenes which the four evangelists describe, and these now silent and solitary shores! This Galilee of the Gentiles saw, indeed, a great light; upon them that sat in the region and shadow of death a divine light arose; but they preferred the darkness, and would not come unto the light lest their deeds should be re-proved. Hence these terribly significant words—"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. . . . And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell" (Luke x. 13, 15). Nowhere has prophetic language received a more striking confirmation than around the Sea of Tiberias. That very sea itself bears most impressive testimony to the awful truth and power of Christ's condemning words. Instead of the numerous vessels which in those ancient times were incessantly traversing its waters, only one single boat is now to be found upon the lake. It is as full as ever of fishes. Five several kinds of fish are to be found in it, and all of excellent quality; but the trade of the fisherman is gone. How extensive and important that trade



was in the days of our Lord may be inferred from the fact that two, evidently considerable, towns upon the shores of the lake—the two Bethsaidas—derived their names from their connection with fishing. The one boat which now remains to navigate these deserted waters we had engaged the preceding night immediately on our arrival at Tiberias. It happened, however, to have been taken away some hours before to fetch a cargo of wood, an article which is to be found only in some of the ravines on the eastern side of the lake. While waiting for its return next forenoon, we paid a visit to the hot-baths about two miles south of Tiberias. Both the building in which they are contained and the baths themselves are in a wretchedly dilapidated condition. As tested by our thermometer, the waters, where they welled up from the ground, exhibited a temperature of 135° of Fahrenheit. There are other hot springs outside of the building, and of similar quality. They are of a salt and bitterish taste, and have a strong sulphureous odour. They are held in much estimation by the natives of the country, especially for their efficacy in rheumatic complaints. The presence of these hot springs, and the abundance of basaltic rock in the neighbourhood, sufficiently attests the volcanic character of the place; a character, indeed, of which, as already mentioned, traces are to be found all along the Jordan valley from Hermon to the Sea of Sodom. The baths are within twenty or thirty yards of the beach at the base of Ard-el-Hamma, from the shoulder of which we descended the night before to Tiberias, and which rises to a height of upwards of 1000 feet above the lake.

After wandering for some time along the shore, watching the fishes swimming lazily along in shoals, with their snouts just touching the surface of the beautifully pellucid waters, and apparently sucking in such insects as came in their way; and after exploring the remains of the old city and the picturesque ruins of the modern one, we returned about an hour after noon to our tents, having at length with our glasses discerned the boat, for whose return we were so impatient, emerging from a creek

on the opposite side of the lake. It was coming out from the mouth of the Wady-Fik, a wild and precipitous cleft in the mountain wall right opposite Tiberias, and in the very centre of which, on a detached and elevated rock, stood the ancient Gamala. Hardly any place in Judea gave the Romans more trouble than that mountain fastness, as Josephus tells. Vespasian himself marched against it from these very hot springs near Tiberias just now described, and succeeded in taking it only after a long and terrible siege. The ruins of massive gates, granite columns, polished stones, a well, baths, &c., which remain about the isolated camel-shaped rock in the Wady-Fik, together with the exact correspondence of the place to the description given by Josephus, leave no room to doubt that on that rock stood Gamala.

It was two P.M. before the lumbering unwieldy boat reached Tiberias. Whether this was the identical boat which Lieutenant Lynch hired at Tiberias in 1848, and christened by the name of *Uncle Sam*, when proceeding to the survey of the Jordan, I am not quite certain. *Uncle Sam* got a hole knocked in its bottom, and foundered in the Jordan, not far down the river; and, if one might judge from the clouted and patched framework of the boat we had to do with, it could have been no other than *Uncle Sam redivivus*.

We embarked at two P.M., with five Arab boatmen as our crew. Our object was to visit the plain of Gennesaret, and to inspect the sites of some of the ancient towns that once girdled the lake. Intending to return to our tents at Tiberias before dark, we took with us neither food nor extra clothing. The weather was magnificent. The lake, smooth as a mirror, lay sleeping beneath the bright blue heaven in tranquil beauty. Our yacht's boat would have shot us up to our proposed landing-place in half an hour. In our huge Arab tub, with its clumsy oars and sleepy rowers, it took us till four o'clock to get abreast of Gennesaret. For the first three miles north of Tiberias the hill that bounds the lake rises from the water's edge. At the distance now



named, it retires a short way from the beach, and here stands the miserable little village of Mejdél; all that remains to represent the Magdala of Scripture, the home of that Mary who was privileged to be the first to behold the risen Redeemer. The town, in those ancient times, must have been eminently picturesque; built on its little plat of level ground, with steep rocky heights folding round it behind, and the broad lake spreading out before it. While the overhanging hills would intercept the view from it to the south and west, the prospect on the other two sides must have been extensive and fine. Northwards its own little plateau breaks out almost immediately into the broad and luxuriant plain of Gennesaret, whose gracefully curving shore and silver strand, fringed with its gay garland of magnificent oleanders is laved by the crystal waters of the lake. Beyond this noble plain the mountains of Galilee swell away up in successive ranges to a height of from three to four thousand feet above the level of the lake; and in the midst of their higher peaks Safed, the supposed "city set on a hill," lifts its conspicuous head. Along the shores of the lake, which from Gennesaret trend away in a north-easterly direction, the eye, looking from the ancient Magdala, would light first on Capernaum, stretching from the summit of the rock on which it was "exalted to heaven," down to the very brink of the lake; next on Bethsaida, then on Chorazin, and a little way farther on would meet the mouth of the Jordan where it rushes into the lake; beyond which it would rest finally on those rugged mountains—that "desert place"—where Christ fed the multitudes with a few loaves of bread. Such was the country from which Mary of Magdala followed Jesus to Jerusalem, with those other pious women who "ministered unto Him of their substance." It is interesting to recollect that among these, her associates in this blessed service, was "Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward," an inhabitant, we can hardly doubt, of Herod's city of Tiberias; a circumstance this, which suggests the pleasing idea, that these Galilean women were, in their own country, neighbours and friends.

We were in the act of crossing the bay of Gennesaret and rowing towards Khan-Minyeh—the site of Capernaum—when a circumstance occurred which entirely deranged our plans. The boat was about a mile from the shore, and we were all gazing intently upon the suggestive scenery around us—on the very beach where Christ called Peter and Andrew, James and John, from their boats and nets, that He might make them fishers of men—and on the hill of Hattin, the Mount of Beatitudes, that overlooks the lovely plain of Gennesaret, and where He pronounced that divine discourse in which He taught a morality that puts to shame all the selfish maxims of the wisdom of this world. While thus employed, our earnest conversation on these exciting and engrossing themes was suddenly disturbed by a movement among the Arab crew. All at once they pulled in their oars, stepped their mast, and began to hoist their long and very ragged lateen sail. What can the fellows mean to do with a sail in a dead calm? But they are right. There comes the breeze rippling and roughening the lately glassy surface of the lake. It reaches us before the sail is rightly set. A few minutes more and it is blowing hard. The bending and often-spliced yard threatens to give way, and the tattered leach of the sail seems as if it would rend right up, and go away in shreds. To go upon a wind with such a craft is impossible. There is nothing for it, but to slack away and run before it. Such a hubbub meanwhile among the Arab crew—screaming, gesticulating, jumping fore and aft, as if they had gone mad. “And where are we going now?” was our first inquiry, when things had at last been got a little into shape. “Where the wind will take us,” was the reply of the old gray-beard at the helm. And away we went, the lake now all tossed into waves, and covered with foaming white-heads, as if a demon had got into its lately tranquil bosom. Here was an adventure on which we had certainly been very far from counting, but which served only to invest with deeper interest our visit to the Sea of Galilee. It brought along with it a fresh illustration of the identity of nature, and a new evi-



dence of the reality of those events which the narratives of Scripture relate. Again and again we read in the writings of the evangelists of just such sudden squalls agitating this sea. It reminded us of that day when Jesus "went into a ship with His disciples, and He said unto them, let us go over unto the other side of the lake." In the calm He fell asleep, and "there came down a storm of wind on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy." The sudden tumult of the elements terrified the disciples. *Quid times: Cæsarem vehis!* They carried one infinitely greater than Cæsar, and yet they feared. What Cæsar, with all his legions at his back, would have been utterly impotent to achieve, needed, from the humble toil-worn Jesus of Nazareth, only the utterance of a word. Awakened by the trembling disciples "He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark iv. 39). But not merely did this sudden gale of ours remind us of what Scripture has so broadly marked as one of the characteristic phenomena of this lake—it blew from the very quarter out of which the gales experienced by our Lord's disciples appear to have come. On the night of that day on which Jesus fed the five thousand in the "desert place," on the east side of the lake, "He constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side." On their way across to "the land of Gennesaret" they were met by a furious blast. "The wind was contrary," and they could make no head against it. It was blowing right out from that long withdrawing valley, at the mouth of which the plain of Gennesaret lies; blowing, in other words, exactly as it was doing upon us. Had we attempted to face it, we should simply have been "tossed with the waves," as they were, "in the midst of the sea."

While we were occupying ourselves with such comments as these—for we had all of us seen too much of the Great Sea to be much discomposed by the ruffling of the elements on this fresh water lake—we were running along before the wind towards the

mouth of the Jordan, at the northern extremity of the lake. The shore to leeward was open and rocky, and the Arabs would not venture to approach it. Passing the sites of Bethsaida and Chorazin, we held on towards the Jordan, our only harbour of refuge, which we reached about half-past five o'clock, and dashing through the surf on the bar, found ourselves all at once floating on the waters of that glorious stream. For a mile and a half above the lake, the Jordan flows through a broad and fertile meadow, fringed with tall reeds, and with the exquisitely beautiful oleander, then all glowing with its brilliant clusters of large pink flowers. The river enters the lake by two mouths, and with a very gentle current.

About half a mile up the stream the boat was run aground on the soft alluvial bank, and we all jumped ashore. While we were strolling about, the boatmen took to fishing, with the very simple apparatus of a baited hook at the end of a long piece of small cord, which they dropped into the stream. Within half an hour they had taken a large number of fish of various sorts—one of the species singularly ugly and repulsive to look at, though the Arabs assured us it was very good eating. It was about two feet in length, somewhat of the shape of a ling, but nearly jet black on the back, and having a broad flat head, with long thick antennæ projecting from the sides of its mouth, like a cat's beard. The Arabs called it by a name which signifies the "father of scales." I presume it is the same that Lynch met with so often in the Jordan, and which he calls the cat-fish.

The flat meadow land above the lake extends farthest on the east side of the Jordan, where it is upwards of two miles broad, from the river to the steep hills which bound the little plain. It is nearly all under cultivation, and was well clothed with crops of wheat, maize, rice, cucumbers, and with some small patches of tobacco. Its cultivators are the Ghawârinch Arabs, who, though they live in tents, do not altogether despise the plough. At the head of this plain, about two miles above the lake, are some ruins which are supposed to mark the site of that Bethsaida

which "Philip the tetrarch" enlarged, and to which he gave the name of Julia, in honour of Julia, the daughter of Cæsar Augustus. It is impossible to reconcile with one another the statements of Scripture on the subject of Bethsaida, except on the assumption of there having been two towns of that name—one on the west, and another on the east side of the Jordan. The sites of both may now be considered as ascertained.

By the time we had made a little survey of this interesting neighbourhood, the sun was all but touching the tops of the mountains of Galilee; the wind was as strong upon the lake as ever, and the Arab boatmen peremptorily refused to leave the shelter of the river. What were we to do? To get something to eat was a first necessity, for there was now small chance of our seeing the dinner at Tiberias, which we had instructed Gaetano to have ready against our return. There was no town or village within twelve or fifteen miles. We were literally in "a desert place," and with no immediate prospect of being able to get away from it. On questioning the boatmen, however, it was discovered that a small tribe of Arabs was encamped at the base of the hills on the western bank of the river—not far from the point where the river emerges from the mountainous district that shuts in the little plain. We determined to visit them, and to cast ourselves on their hospitality. Having pushed off our boat, we partly rowed and partly punted it up the course of the river, till we came opposite the place where the Arabs had pitched their tents. Their camp occupied a sheltered nook, not more than two or three hundred yards from the stream. Their black camel-hair tents, ten or twelve in number, were ranged in a semicircle. The young men of the tribe were bringing in the sheep, cattle, and horses for the night, into a sort of inclosed space between the tents and the river; the women were busy preparing the evening meal, baking bread over their tent fires, on a utensil that very much resembled a *Scotch girdle*, and boiling, in large pans, their favourite messes of milk and Indian corn. At the door of the principal tent sat the



sheikh of the tribe, a venerable old man, with a snow-white beard that covered his breast. It was such a picture as recalled to mind the figure of the patriarch Abraham, as he "sat at the tent door" at Mamre, on that memorable occasion when he entertained "angels unawares."

Our old Arab did not, indeed, rise and "run to meet us," but he received us with great courtesy and kindness. His people, male and female, clustered around us, and when he thought they had sufficiently indulged their curiosity, and might be becoming troublesome to us, he sent them off to their own affairs with a simple look, and a dignified wave of the hand. It was the season of Ramadân, during which the Koran requires its disciples to fast from two hours before sunrise till the sun has set. The impostor who made that law was not geographer enough to know that there are regions in which it would bind men, as in Lapland or Greenland, to fast for six weeks on end. The Bible makes no such mistakes. It is hard enough to observe this Moslem law for forty days together, even in countries where the sun is little more at a time than thirteen hours in the heavens. One poor fellow was sitting beside the sheikh,—probably one of his family,—his lips were parched, his look was that of complete exhaustion, and his hand grasped the narrow neck of a *goulah*, or earthen jar, which stood on the ground beside him, full of water from the adjacent river; but he had not yet dared to touch it. The sun was, indeed, beneath the lofty hills, but it might not be beneath the sea. Knowing that Europeans, with their watches can judge more accurately of time than the poor Arabs, he looked up when we approached, and earnestly inquired if the sun were really set? Being assured by our interpreter that it was, he uttered an exclamation of thanks to Allah, and carrying the *goulah* to his mouth, drank deep and long.

Altogether this scene at the Arab tents, shut in between the mountains of Naphtali and Bashan, far away from all the usages and associations of European life, was singularly exciting. Sitting down with these sons of the desert, we ate of their bread



and drank of their cup, and were refreshed. The moon was shining brightly down on this picture of ancient pastoral life when we returned to our boat.

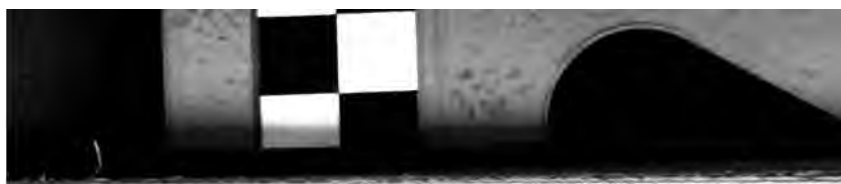
It was now that we began to feel the want of any warmer clothing than we had worn during the heat of the day. The night grew chill. To sleep was all but impossible. The bottom of the boat was not floored; it was moreover ribbed all round in such a fashion that to lie down was to break one's bones. Growing weary of such uncomfortable quarters we roused up the boatmen, and insisted on their dropping down the stream, and ascertaining whether it were not now practicable to return to Tiberias. The boat was accordingly, though most reluctantly, unmoored, and we glided down the river to within 500 yards of the lake. Here the noise of the surf on the bar at once arrested our timid crew, and the anchor was dropped immediately, and in spite of all we could say. "These Franks" they were overheard repeating to one another, "would go out to sea if they should die!" Instead of going to sea they went to sleep; while we did our best to while away the hours, talking alternately of home, and of the strange adventures of the day. About an hour after midnight all was so calm that we again stirred up the Arabs. They looked and listened for a while, and came at last to the conclusion that it was now safe to proceed. "Now the wind sleeps," said the old Arab skipper, and he gave his orders accordingly. The anchor was lifted, the oars were manned, and in a few minutes we were again upon the lake. Nearly five hours were occupied in rowing us back to Tiberias. Our compensation for the tedious voyage was to witness the moon and the stars fading and sinking into the bright bosom of the morning; to see the sun first flushing all the eastern sky, then gilding the summits of the Galilean hills on the opposite verge of the horizon, and finally coming up himself in cloudless glory above the mountains of the Jaulân, and pouring down a flood of light upon the broad waters of the lake, now as calm and smooth as if no breath of wind had ever swept over it. About six A.M. of Friday,



the 8th May, we landed at Tiberias. A bath in the lake, and a good breakfast, put to flight all the fatigues of the preceding night, and set us all up for the journey to Safed, on which we started about ten o'clock in the forenoon.

As already explained, the lake for about three miles north of Tiberias has no beach, the hills dropping right down to the water's edge. The path we followed runs along the face of these hills, at an average height of from two to three hundred feet. It is narrow and rough, but affords everywhere a fine view of the lake and of the hills that encircle its shores. At Mejdél the path descends to the little plateau of level ground on which the hamlet of that name stands. Near it there are heaps of stones and mounds—remains, no doubt, of the ancient Magdala. Close to Mejdél is the mouth of the Wady-el-Hamâm, or valley of the pigeons. About a mile up this valley there are tall cliffs, 600 feet in height, the face of which is full of caves—the haunt, as Josephus tells, of robbers who overran the country in Herod's time, and whom he determined to destroy. To effect this, “he at length made use of a contrivance that was subject to the utmost hazard; for he let down the most hardy of his men in chests, and set them at the mouths of the dens. Now these men slew the robbers and their families, and when they made resistance they sent in fire upon them. . . . By these means Herod subdued these caves and the robbers that were in them.”* On the height above those cliffs is Irbid, the ancient Arbela, and the Beth-arbel of Scripture, of which considerable ruins still remain. This place was a fortress, as early at least as the times of Hosea (x. 14). The stream that issues from this historical valley falls into the lake, after traversing the south-eastern part of the plain of Gennesaret. This rich and beautiful plain begins a very short way beyond Mejdél. Its breadth from the shore westwards is upwards of two miles, and its length along the shore is fully three miles. On the south it is shut in by the

* Josephus, *Wars*, book i. chap. xvi. § 4, 5.



hills that run westwards from Mejdal towards Hattin; on the north by the mountains of Galilee. Its fertility is such, even at the present day, as all but fully to vindicate the glowing terms in which it is spoken of by Josephus, who says: "One may call this place the ambition of nature, where it forces those plants that are naturally enemies to one another to agree together. It is a happy contention of the seasons, as if every one of them had claim to this country; for it not only nourishes different sorts of autumnal fruits beyond men's expectation, but preserves them also a great while. It supplies men with the principal fruits—with grapes and figs—continually during ten months of the year, and the rest of the fruits as they become ripe together through the whole year; for, besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a most fertile fountain. The people of the country call it Caphernaum."* The Jewish historian also gives the dimensions of this "country of Gennesareth," as he expressly calls it, as being thirty furlongs by twenty—a measurement corresponding very closely to that of modern travellers.

As regards his statement about the temperature of the district, it is to be recollected that its level is fully 600 feet lower than the Mediterranean, and consequently that its climate partakes of that semi-tropical character which belongs to the whole Ghor. We had seen this plain from our boat the day before, and had been much struck with the luxuriance of the vegetation that covered it. In now riding through it, we had ample proof all around us of the extraordinary strength and richness of its fine alluvial soil. Along the shore the oleanders and other flowering plants gave it the look of a great shrubbery-garden. Farther in, the lotus-tree, the thorny nubk, the wild fig, the dwarf-palm, and, above all, thistles in broad brakes, dense as the most impervious jungle, and six or seven feet in height, sufficiently showed the productive capabilities of this "land of Gennesaret." Intermingled with these rank growths of nature's own rearing, were

* Josephus, *Wars*, book iii. chap. x. § 8.



considerable breadths of grain crop of corresponding richness. Such, in short, is the vigour of the vegetation that covers this plain, that, even on horseback, it was only by keeping to the narrow and somewhat labyrinthine track that it was possible to make one's way through it.

The most important circumstance, however, connected with the statement of Josephus regarding it is, that it goes far to settle the question as to the true site of Capernaum. Two different places claim this distinction, namely, Khan-Minyeh, on the north-eastern border of the plain, and Tell-Hûm, about three and a half miles farther north along the shores of the lake. Now, while the statement of Josephus proves that this plain constitutes what was known in his time as the country or district of Gennesareth, the language of Scripture, on the other hand, seems plainly to intimate, that within the district of Gennesaret Capernaum stood. The evangelist Mark, when recording the miracle of the loaves and fishes, tells that our Lord's disciples returned by boat from the desert place east of the Jordan where it took place, and "came into the land of Gennesaret," where they "drew to the shore" (vi. 53). And next, the apostle John, in relating the same event, says, "they entered into a ship, and went over the sea to Capernaum" (vi. 17); and he adds that, after receiving their Divine Master on board, "immediately the ship was at the land *whither they went*;" that is to say, they embarked with the intention of going towards Capernaum, and thither they actually came. These passages, therefore, plainly place Capernaum in the land of Gennesaret; and by so doing, exclude the claim of Tell-Hûm to be regarded as the site of that city. Tell-Hûm is not in Gennesaret;—Khan-Minyeh is. It is further manifest, from the statement of Josephus, that there was a notable fountain at Capernaum: for the fountain bore the name of the town. There is no fountain of any kind at Tell-Hûm;—there is a large, copious, and singularly beautiful fountain at Khan-Minyeh. The fountain issues from the base of a steep rock on the margin of the plain of Gennesaret, and is over-



shadowed at one end by a splendid fig-tree, from which it derives the name of Ain-et-Tin. Furthermore, between this fountain and the borders of the lake, there are mounds and heaps of stones and rubbish buried amid the rank vegetation, and scattered over a space of several acres, which leave no room to doubt, that in ancient times a town actually stood here. Allusion has been already made to the expression of our Lord, in which he speaks of Capernaum as "exalted to heaven." That His own presence and preaching in it constituted its real exaltation there can be no doubt, and there can be as little that it was for despising that privilege it was to be "thrust down to hell." At the same time, the form of expression naturally suggests the idea that there was something in the very situation of the town that corresponded with the terms of the Divine denunciation. Scripture, to say the least of it, is full of examples, in which the local position of places, like that of Jerusalem itself, is made the basis of the language which, in a spiritual sense, is applied to them. It is, therefore, at any rate an interesting coincidence that, immediately above the level ground at Khan-Minyeh, on which the heaps of stones are found, there rises to the height of 300 feet a detached and terraced hill, flat on the top, and which, if built upon, must have given a most commanding aspect to the town. From this acropolis, Capernaum would look so proudly down over both the plain and the lake as to give peculiar point and fitness to the strong figurative expression which spoke of it as "exalted to heaven." The same considerations would of course equally suggest how the casting down of such a city, the hurling of it from its lofty eminence, and strewing the plain beneath with its ruins, would present the very picture of a city thrust down to the abyss. If, indeed, there were not other and altogether independent grounds on which to rest the claims of Khan-Minyeh as the true Capernaum, the circumstance now alluded to would be of little force. Added, however, to these other grounds, it does contribute to the argument a not unmeaning testimony of its own.



Certainly, if Capernaum, as Van de Velde assumes, was the "toll city on the way of the sea," Khan-Minyeh is much more likely to be the place where such a city might be expected to have stood, than Tell-Hûm which, nevertheless, he regards as the true Capernaum. Khan-Minyeh stands precisely at that point where the great thoroughfare from Damascus and the East comes down from the hills of Naphtali and enters on what might be called the low country of Zebulun. It is, in short, in the direct line of the highway that crosses the Jordan by the Jisr-benât-Yakub at the lower end of the Hulêh, and passes on by Mount Tabor and the plain of Jezreel to the sea-coast and to Egypt. The fact, indeed, that such men, among recent travellers, as Dr. Wilson, of Bombay, and Van de Velde take the side of Tell-Hûm, is sufficient to prove that something can be said in its favour. The weight of evidence, however, appears to me decidedly to lie on the side of Khan-Minyeh; and those who wish to examine it in full detail will find it calmly and ably set forth in the great work of Dr. Robinson.* About a mile northwards along the lake from Khan-Minyeh, in a little bend of the shore, is Et-Tabighah, where there are ruins which are by common consent identified with Bethsaida—the home of those humble fishermen, Peter and Andrew, James and John, who became apostles of Christ. The shore opposite Et-Tabighah exhibits just such a smooth beach as fishermen love for drawing up their boats. From two to three miles still farther along the shore is Tell-Hûm, which Robinson, Porter, and others, regard as the site of the ancient Chorazin.

From the height above Khan-Minyeh, we had lying beneath us, in one connected view, the whole of those deeply-interesting localities that have now been named. On the face of that varied and beautiful scene, one could trace without an effort the groundwork of not a few of those parables in which, with equal simplicity and beauty, our Saviour expounded here, in this land of

* *Researches*, vol. i. pages 348-358.



Gennesaret, His own glorious and blessed gospel. There is the bay, now so deserted, but then all alive with its busy fishermen, that suggested the figure by which the gospel was compared to a net cast into the sea and bringing up of all kinds. Yonder is the cultivated plain with beaten paths running through it, with its patches of shallow and rocky soil near the sides; its thickets of thorns and briars every here and there; and its good ground needing only to be prepared for the reception of the seed—all the materials, in short, for the telling parable of the sower. And here, beside us, was the highway of the traders, who were ever passing to and fro with their costly wares through this once populous region, and whose occasional presence among His hearers would give such meaning and point to the words in which He likened the kingdom of heaven “unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls.” It was from that very strand on which we were now looking down the boat was pushed off to detach Him a little from the crowds that thronged the shore, when “He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold a sower went forth to sow;” and when in the same divine discourse He employed the many other suggestive and singularly appropriate methods of address to which allusion has now been made. Every object in nature around us, therefore, was fragrant with memories of our Lord. And not the least affecting and awful of these memories we found in the very silence and solitude that reign around these once-teeming shores. The thought that had struck us so forcibly the day before on first surveying this country from Tiberias, returned with double force here, when sitting above the ruins of Capernaum. More desolate than even Tyre and Sidon are the shores and the cities of the Sea of Galilee!

From Khan-Minyeh we followed as far as the Khan-Jubb-Yusûf, the old caravan road from Egypt to Syria, already alluded to. This road slants up the hills that overhang the north-western shores of the Galilean Lake. At best it is a mere bridle-path, and in many places it is rocky and rugged in the extreme. Before reaching the khan the path attains a



height of probably 1500 or 1800 feet, an elevation which brings the entire lake from one end to the other, and the whole country far and wide around it, completely into view. A heavy thunderstorm was coming up the lake from Tiberias, and threatening to overtake us, which made us push on for the khan to make sure of shelter. As it turned out, however, only the mere skirt of the shower came our way. The khan is a large edifice, strongly built, having in the centre a spacious court, surrounded with vaulted chambers sufficient to afford stable accommodation for a regiment of cavalry. Though in tolerable preservation, neither man nor beast was to be seen about it;—with the exception, indeed, of one or two shepherds near Mejdél, we had not met a human being since we left Tiberias. The name of Yúsûf—Joseph—has been given to this khan, in deference to an old but groundless tradition that it was here Joseph was cast by his brethren into a pit. Dothan, where that scene actually occurred, has been already noticed as situated a little to the south of Jenin. At this khan we left the caravan road and turned westwards through an upland valley which led us, after nearly an hour's riding, into the Wady-Leimôn, which winds away down towards the plain of Gennesaret. Our course led us up this wady amid scenery of mingled grandeur and beauty. Near the head of it a cliff shoots up on its eastern side, perpendicular as a wall, to a height of 700 or 800 feet. Five or six eagles were soaring over the summit of this stupendous cliff, and swooping down, every now and then, to their inaccessible eyries on its lofty brow. Here we crossed the mountain stream that flows beneath the rock, and ascended the steep hill on the opposite side of the ravine, which by and bye carried us up to a height from which we looked down on the very top of the tall cliff that lately towered so majestically above us. The cultivation which here began to clothe the face of the hills gave indications of our approach to Safed, at which we arrived about four P.M. Nothing can be more romantic than its position. It is surrounded by a sea of hills, itself occupying the western face



of a conical-shaped peak, upon the very apex of which stands the castle of the town, at an altitude—according to Van de Velde—of 2775 feet above the level of the sea, and therefore of considerably more than 3000 feet above the Lake of Tiberias, upon which, as from an eagle's nest, Safed looks down.* Deep valleys sweep nearly all round the particular height which Safed crowns. Beyond these valleys, to the north and west, other and still loftier hills rise; but to the south-west, south, and south-east, it overtops every other eminence, and commands, in consequence, a prospect in these directions far and wide as the eye can range. South-west, Tabor, the little Hermon, and Gilboa seem to be at our feet, and far away in the distance the mountains of Samaria and Judea. Due south appears the noble Sea of Tiberias in the foreground, and away over and beyond it the deep Ghor stretching onwards and downwards towards the Dead Sea. South-east the ancient kingdom of Bashan, a vast table-land spreading out eastwards from the Jordan valley till it is lost in the Arabian Desert.

We rode through the lower part of the town, the houses of which rise in successive terraces, the roofs of one row serving as the street for the one above. It was owing to this peculiar construction of the town on the steep hill top that the same tremendous earthquake of 1837, which shook down the strong walls of Tiberias, committed such havoc upon Safed. It happened at early dawn, when the poor people were mostly in their beds. As the uppermost houses yielded to the shock and gave way, they came right down on those immediately beneath. While the foundations of the place were rocking with the earthquake, the falling town was thus at the same time destroying itself. According to the accounts of the catastrophe that were published shortly after its occurrence, about 4000 Jews and 1000 Moslems were buried in the ruins. This statement would seem, however, to have exaggerated the actual loss of life, as the Jews of Safed

* *Memoir, &c.*, by C. W. M. Van de Velde, page 71.

assured Dr. Wilson, of Bombay, when he visited the place about six years after the event, that the real number of the Jews who perished was about 2000, and of the Moslems about 300. The town has been partially rebuilt, though of course the traces of the terrible calamity are still everywhere apparent. The castle on the summit of the hill has been shaken to pieces, though quite enough remains to illustrate its ancient strength, and to explain the resistance which, during the wars of the Crusades, it offered to the Saracens. The houses being all built of the white limestone rock of the neighbourhood, contrast finely with the verdant foliage of the fig, walnut, olive, and pomegranate trees that cluster everywhere around them. The present population of the place is said to be about 7000, of whom 2000 are Jews. Judging from their houses, and from the dress and appearance of the Jews themselves, they seem to be in a more prosperous worldly condition than any of the same people whom we saw in Palestine. No sooner had we reached our camping ground than many of them crowded around us offering to sell us fresh eggs, bread, milk, wine, &c., and all at such exorbitant prices as quite to sustain the reputation of their race. Our tents were pitched immediately below the town, on a beautiful little grassy plateau overhanging the deep valley beneath the hill of Safed, and beyond which the much loftier Jebel-Jarmuk towers up into the sky.

On the farther side of this valley, at the distance of two miles, is Meirôn, which the Jews of Safed regard as the Shimron-meron of Scripture (Josh. xii. 20). As Shimron-meron is mentioned in the book of Joshua in immediate connection with Hazor, which stood somewhere near Lake Merom, and therefore quite in the neighbourhood, it is not unlikely that the supposition may be correct. Meirôn is a sacred place among the Jews of Safed. There lie the remains of some of their most famous rabbis, to whose tombs they make frequent visits. Safed is not mentioned in Scripture, and can hardly be identified in history at any period earlier than the Crusades. It seems to be not



more than 300 years since it became a place of interest and of resort to the Jews. Two or three centuries ago it was one of their chief schools of learning.

From Safed northwards is a continuous hill-country—the ancient Naphtali—the “hind let loose,” who once possessed this lovely mountain-land. It is, in fact, the commencement of the grand range of the Lebanon. Kedesh-Naphtali, its chief city, lay nearly due north from Safed, at a distance in a straight line of about thirteen or fourteen miles. Its site, still bearing the name of Kedes, is well ascertained, and is covered with extensive ruins. It is close to the eastern margin of this broad range of hills, overlooking the adjacent plain of the Hulèh.

At six A.M. on Saturday, the 9th of May, we set off for Bania, the ancient Cesarea-Philippi, at the base of the great Hermon. Our route lay in a north-easterly direction among the hill tops. Dipping first into a deep hollow full of vines, olives, and pomegranates, and then rising up again to a greater elevation than before, we soon lost sight of Safed, and ere long lost our way. There were so many tracks crossing and re-crossing one another that our mukharis became bewildered. At length, however, after wandering on for about two hours, we found ourselves upon the eastern brow of this elevated region, and all uncertainty about our position was at once at an end. The rich green plain of the Hulèh was at our feet, its bright little lake, about four miles in length by three in breadth, reflecting the clear blue of the sky like a sapphire imbedded in emeralds. At the head of the plain the huge and lofty Hermon, white with snow, shut up the northward view at a distance, as the crow flies, of seventeen or eighteen miles. The plain itself, from the base of Hermon downwards for fifteen or sixteen miles, is nearly a dead level. It is walled in on the west by the steep and lofty range of the hills of Kedesh-Naphtali, on the brow of which we stood. On the east it is bounded by the lower and more gradually ascending hills of Bashan, the fine pasturage of whose grassy slopes must have furnished ample feeding for “the kine of Bashan,” to

which Amos indignantly likens the gross and sensual lords of Samaria. The different head streams of the Jordan issuing from among the roots of Hermon gradually gather into one in the upper part of the plain, and flow as a united stream into the lake, which is girt all round with a broad margin of tall rushes, reeds, canes, and other aquatic plants, which make it difficult—in many places all but impossible—to get near its waters. It is due, probably, to this difficulty that no traveller has, as yet, tested the truth of the statements of Theophrastus and Pliny as to the existence of the Egyptian papyrus in the marshes of a Syrian lake, their account of which seems plainly to imply that they refer to Merom. It is well known that the plant has long since entirely disappeared from Egypt itself, where once it was so abundant. These words of Isaiah contained in “the burden of Egypt” have been literally fulfilled—“The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, . . . shall wither, be driven away, and be no more” (xix. 7). A papyrus, apparently identical with that of the Nile, is found growing luxuriantly at the present day in Sicily, on a tributary of the Anapus, a river that falls into the Bay of Syracuse. A species of the same plant was recently found by the Abbé Michon, between Jaffa and Carmel, in some of the streams that cross the plain of Sharon. Dr. Wilson, of Bombay, states that he saw the papyrus at the lower extremity of this plain of the Hulêh, near the Jisr-benât-Yakûb. His reference to it is extremely brief and uncircumstantial. “We noticed the papyrus,” he says, “which is also seen on the banks of some of the rivers running into the Mediterranean on the western coast.”* If it was really the papyrus which Dr. Wilson saw, the fact is interesting as going to confirm the accuracy of Bruce, who asserted, long ago, that he found the plant in the very same place. It is possible that this brief and passing allusion to the subject may fall under the eye of some future traveller in Syria of competent botanical knowledge, who will set the matter conclusively at rest.

* *Lands of the Bible*, vol. ii. page 317.



The earliest extant reference to this uppermost of the Jordan lakes occurs in the book of Joshua. It was here, on the beautiful plain around this lake, the Canaanites made their most desperate effort to resist the triumphant hosts of Israel. All northwards from Jericho and Hebron the native princes and their tribes had been broken and dispersed, and the land was fast falling into the hands of the chosen people. Jabin, the king of Hazor, the petty sovereign of the head of the Jordan valley, was probably the most considerable of the native chieftains whose territories were as yet unsubdued. Hearing of the storm of war that was rolling upwards from Jericho, and Ai, and Gibeon, and whose approaching thunders were already rousing the echoes of his native Hermon, he sent forth his messengers in haste to gather together the whole remaining strength of the Canaanitish tribes. Over all these hills, north, east, and west, his fleetest messengers had sped, with the fiery cross in their hands; and southwards, too, beyond the Sea of Galilee, and as far as Jezreel, to rally every bowman from the hills, and every spearman and war chariot from the plains that could possibly be mustered for this life and death struggle. Jabin's war cry was not in vain. The chiefs of the native tribes "went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people even as the sand that is upon the sea-shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many. And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel" (Josh. xi. 4, 5). Their numbers proved unavailing. Joshua and his men of war, advancing swiftly, and, not improbably, through those very hills among which we had been wandering, "came against them by the waters of Merom suddenly." The hastily collected and multifarious army of the confederates was overwhelmed, and few remained to tell the tale of that disastrous day. By this crowning victory the whole land, from south to north—"from Halak that goeth up to Seir"—away beyond the Dead Sea—"even unto Beal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon," came into Joshua's power.



above Ain-Melláhah, on the edge of the swamp, we passed right through a sort of canvas-town—an immense native camp—consisting of hundreds of tents, arranged in rows like streets, and swarming with a numerous Arab population. They were very noisy and rather rude as we made our way through them, and seemed half disposed to obstruct the passage of some of our baggage horses. We were not sorry when we found ourselves fairly out of their hands.

For several hours a heavy thunder-storm had been blackening all the northern sky, and discharging torrents of rain over the whole upper end of the plain. Fortunately the thunder cloud had now rolled away over to the hills of Bashan, and we escaped the wetting we had anticipated. It had, however, so thoroughly drenched the entire district at which we had arrived, that we experienced the utmost difficulty in getting on. At its northern extremity the plain is traversed by low hills, which run across from the hills of Naphtali to the roots of Mount Hermon. This cross line of hills, hummocky and irregular in shape, is of great breadth, and forms the break or barrier between the Jordan valley and Coele-Syria. It is this obstruction that arrests the southward course of the Litány, the ancient Leontes, and forces it to seek the rugged passage westwards, through a wild and narrow gorge in the Lebanon, by which it reaches the Mediterranean. Our route in approaching Baniás should have lain along the southern base of this transverse chain of low hills, but owing to the deluge of rain which had recently fallen, we were forced to keep upon the face of these hills, the level ground beneath them being completely flooded. Every little rill and rivulet had swelled into a torrent. Between these numerous streams that were rushing down the hollows of the hill-side, the sloping hill-side itself was one interminable field of rocks and stones. For at least two hours we were entangled in this difficult ground, alternately plunging through roaring brooks, and scrambling among huge boulders that lay as thick as pebbles on a sea-beach. Two hours of this tedious and laborious riding brought us to the bank of the Nahr



Hásbáni, one of the head waters of the Jordan, which rises near Hasbeiya, about ten or twelve miles farther north, at the north-western base of Hermon. It was rushing along in full flood, at the bottom of a very pretty ravine, where it was often half hidden amid the natural wood—chiefly oleanders, willows, poplars, sycamores, and mountain ash—that lined its banks. We crossed it by the Jisr-el-Ghujar, a lofty narrow bridge of three arches, and entirely without parapets. It required some nerve on the part of the ladies to face this enterprise, from which, however, none of them shrunk. A short way beyond the river we came to the famous Tell-el-Kâdy, from the base of which one of the branches of the Jordan takes its rise. The tell, or round hill, itself is a mass of basaltic *tufa*, nearly a hundred feet in height; and the whole neighbourhood is covered with huge masses of basalt. The tell belongs, most probably, to the crater of an extinct volcano. It is partly covered with wood; and the noble fountain which rises beneath it, after first spreading out into a large pool, sweeps away southward, in a broad and powerful stream, towards lake Hulêh.

It was, I believe, Dr. Wilson, of Bombay, who first noticed the circumstance that *Kâdy* and *Dan* have much the same meaning—both signifying a judge, or judging. This coincidence, so soon as he noticed it, suggested to him the idea that Tell-el-Kâdy might be the Dan of Scripture—the frontier town of the land of Israel in the north. “Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, *from Dan even to Beer-sheba*” (Judg. xx. 1). Beer-sheba being on the south border of Palestine, it was natural to look for Dan here, at the opposite extremity of the country. Its situation, indeed, had long been proximately ascertained. Josephus describes its position expressly as being at “the fountains of the lesser Jordan.”* In another passage, when speaking of lake Hulêh, or Samochonitis, as he calls it, he says—“Its

* *Antiquities*, book v. chap. iii. § 1.

marshes reach as far as the place Daphne, which, in other respects, is a delicious place, and hath such fountains as supply water to what is called little Jordan, under the temple of the golden calf, where it is sent into the great Jordan."* About two miles below Tell-el-Kâdy there is another tell in the plain which bears the name of Difneh to this day, and which is close to the marshes of lake Hulêh. A little way farther down than Difneh, the waters of the little Jordan, issuing from Tell-el-Kâdy, fall into the far larger stream from Banias, and which may well be called the great Jordan. Without going farther into the evidence upon the subject of the identification of Tell-el-Kâdy with Dan, it is quite safe to say that it may be considered as complete. Here, then, it was that Abraham overtook Chedorlaomer, laden with the spoil of the cities of the plain, and chased him over the shoulder of Hermon to Hobah, near Damascus. Here stood that Laish, or Leshem, upon whose colonists from Zidon, dwelling careless and secure, the 600 men of Dan suddenly fell and smote them with the edge of the sword, and burned their city with fire, and built upon its ruins their own new city, which they called Dan, "after the name of Dan their father." Jacob had said of Dan "he shall judge his people." And in this modern name of Tell-el-Kâdy, which the site of the ancient city still bears, the memory of Jacob's prophecy, delivered more than three thousand years ago, is still preserved. That the Danites should ever have had anything to do with a region so far removed from their own tribal territory was the unlikeliest of all things. The portion of the land assigned to them was on the borders of Philistia. And yet Moses, in the prophetic blessing which he pronounced upon the children of Israel, had said of Dan—"Dan is a lion's whelp: *he shall leap from Bashan*" (Deut. xxxiii. 22). That prophecy was literally fulfilled. Like a lion springing upon his prey, the 600 men of Dan rushed down from the heights of Bashan upon the inhabi-

* Wars, book iv. chap. i. § 1.



tants of Laish. Finding their own portion of the land insufficient for their accommodation, and having discovered by their spies this tempting settlement at the foot of Hermon, these Danites, by a long march and a sudden onfall, seized it. In this same place it was that, long afterwards, Jeroboam set up one of his golden calves.

From this interesting spot to the eastern side of the plain, the distance is from two to three miles. That whole space has the appearance of an English park run wild. It is studded all over with noble oaks, gnarled and picturesque, like those of an ancient forest. Scattered with lavish profusion among these stately trees, the oleander, the myrtle, the hawthorn, the mulberry, the pomegranate, added both fragrance and beauty to this enchanting scene. From the margin of the plain the majestic Hermon towers up into the heavens to a height of nearly 10,000 feet. A more truly magnificent mountain I have never seen. While its lofty summits were white with snow, its sides, cleft by deep ravines, were clothed with massive woods down to its very base. Bania, our resting-place for the night, and where we designed to remain over the approaching Sabbath, lies on a broad plateau in the lap of Hermon, about 1200 feet above the level of the sea. Wearied though we were with our long and fatiguing journey, for it was now within an hour of sunset, this glorious scenery revived us all. From the swamps and boulders, over which we had been floundering and stumbling for the two preceding hours, to these beautiful forest glades, carpeted with the richest grass and strewn with countless wild flowers, the transition was as sudden as it was great. It was like passing from Milton's Serbonian bog into the bowers of paradise. Purified by the recent storm, the air was fresh and delicious, and the birds, as we rode along, were making the whole woodland ring with their evening song.

By the time we had pushed our way up through a dense primeval forest to the elevated and spacious plateau on which Bania stands, the daylight was already beginning to fade. As

we drew near the place, our ears were saluted with the deep sound of roaring torrents and thundering waterfalls. A little farther on, and we found ourselves actually riding up the bed of a deep and rapid stream. The thunder-rain upon the mountain had turned the road into a river. On the one side, this road was shut in by a steep rocky bank, and on the other by a high wall. In the very throat of this watery gorge, a donkey laden, pannier-wise, with two immense bundles of young wood, had got jammed in the narrow pass, and had stuck fast. How to get past was the difficulty, for the poor beast and its driver seemed equally helpless. At length our long-legged mukhari, Ahmed, came striding up, threw the bundles into the stream, drove the donkey out of the way, and we were enabled to advance. Fifty yards farther on, we reached the impetuous torrent, leaping from rock to rock down its rapidly descending course, and which for some time past had been stunning us with its deafening roar. It was spanned by a narrow bridge of a single arch, and without parapets, of course, for in Syria everything is in ruinous disrepair. My wife and I had just crossed this bridge, when, on looking round, I discovered to my infinite dismay the powerful and handsome mule, which carried in its capacious panniers Gaetano's entire *batterie de cuisine*, and the whole contents of our butler's pantry besides, taking the ford above the bridge, and advancing deliberately into the rushing stream. Ahmed and Gaetano, who made the discovery of what was going on only when it was too late to prevent it, were equally in despair—the one about his mule, the other about his panniers. They shouted and screamed, and flung stones from the bridge to turn the animal back, but all in vain. The roar of the river would have drowned a hundred voices; and amid the commotion made by the boiling and raging waters, the missiles of Gaetano and Ahmed were neither heard nor seen by the unlucky mule. Immediately below the bridge, the river tumbled down in a furious cascade, some fifteen or twenty feet; and every moment I expected to see the poor beast sucked under the arch and hurled into the foam-



ing abyss. For once the mule had cause to rejoice in the solid weight upon its back. Gaetano's iron ware saved it. But for the ponderous load it carried, it would inevitably have been swept off its feet and lost. With instinctive sagacity, keeping its head up the stream, and feeling its way cautiously at every step, slowly and steadily it made its way across, and after shaking the spray from its long ears, to our great joy the sturdy mule mounted the opposite bank, and went quietly on its way. We were now in the paltry village of fifty or sixty families, which stands amid the ruins of the once splendid city of Banias or Paneas, otherwise known as Cesarea-Philippi. Its situation was admirably chosen both for strategy and beauty. The site on which it stood lies between two deep ravines—the one of which is the bed of the main branch of the Jordan, and the other of a smaller mountain stream. These two ravines and rivers meet below the site of the ancient city; thus encompassing and intrenching the entire area which it occupied on its two sides and in front. Behind, a deep *fosse* ran across from the one ravine to the other. Along the brink of this *fosse*, and nearly all round the other three sides overhanging the rivers, extensive remains of the ancient wall and of its flanking towers and bastions still stand. Our camping-ground was outside of and above the city, immediately beyond the *fosse* already described. We rode accordingly right on, and passing out through a breach in the ancient wall, and crossing the old and still deep *fosse*, we found ourselves in a fine grove of venerable olive-trees. It was nearly dark before our tents were pitched; but the night was fine, and Gaetano's fire, which had been meanwhile kindled, was crackling and blazing beneath one of the old trees, sending its ruddy glare through the dense grove, and giving "cheerful note" of preparations, in which we were all not a little interested after our long and exhausting ride. Shortly afterwards, the moon, coming up over the shoulder of the mountain above us, turned the night almost into day.

"The next day was the Sabbath," and with us, as usual, it

was a day of rest. Dr. Porter remarks of English travellers in Syria, that while "they despise the fasts and feasts of Moslems and Christians, they at least *seem* equally to despise the Sundays and services of their own church. The gentleman who would feel shocked at the bare idea of employing his labourers or workmen on the Sunday in his own country, does not scruple systematically to employ his muleteers or his guides on that day in Syria. It would add greatly to the respect," he adds, "which the English name inspires, if Englishmen were more careful to carry with them into foreign lands both the spirit and the form of that faith which is the pride and glory of their country; and it would tend to remove from them a grievous reproach, if they would be always careful to distinguish between the liberty of the gospel and the license of infidelity."* Dr. Porter is well acquainted with the habits of travellers in that country, and the advice, I have no doubt, is as needful and seasonable as it is unquestionably sound and good. I think I could often trace a more kind and courteous bearing towards us on the part of the natives who clustered around our tents, after they had been listening and looking on in respectful silence, while we conducted our week-day or Sabbath devotions. At Baniyas half the population of the place were gathered about us during our morning worship; and though even the ladies in the course of the day wandered sometimes quite alone all round the neighbourhood, none of them experienced the slightest incivility.

We were now on the very outskirts of Judea, but we were still on ground that had been trodden by the feet of our Lord. In the course of our journey, we had visited those scenes that are most closely associated with His humiliation. We had been at Bethlehem, where He was born in a stable and cradled in a manger; at Nazareth, where He was brought up from childhood under the roof of a humble carpenter; at Jerusalem, where He was crucified as a malefactor between two thieves. And now, before finally quitting the land, we had come to the place where

* *Syria and Palestine*, introduction, lvii.

He received and exhibited a foretaste of His glory. Allusion has been already made to the old tradition which assigned the transfiguration to Mount Tabor. The founders of that tradition seem to have taken for granted—first, that the event occurred in Galilee; and next, that in the form and position of Tabor there was something answering exactly to the statement about Jesus taking the three disciples, and bringing “them up into an high mountain apart;” because Tabor is the only mountain of Galilee that stands *apart* from the rest of the Galilean hills. This whole theory is founded on a double mistake. The event did not occur in Galilee; and the term *apart* is not meant to apply to the mountain but to the disciples. *Apart*—that is, in a lonely, sequestered situation—they could not possibly have been on a little hill like Tabor, with a town on its summit and another at its base. The account of the transfiguration is found in three of the evangelists (Matt. xvii., Mark ix., Luke ix.) In all the three it is distinctly intimated in the preceding context, that immediately before the event, Jesus had gone over to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, apparently to be out of the way of the murderer of John the Baptist. By two of these evangelists, Matthew and Mark, it is expressly stated, that on leaving that place, He came, the one says, “into the coasts,” the other, “into the towns” of “*Cesarea-Philippi*.” By these two evangelists, it is said that the transfiguration took place “six days” after He came into that district. Luke, on the other hand,—whose narrative passes on at once to the event of the transfiguration, without introducing the circumstance of His having gone meanwhile to the country of *Cesarea-Philippi*,—says, that the transfiguration took place “about an *eight* days after” the occurrences he had just described as happening in the desert place beyond the Sea of Galilee. It is interesting to notice the minute accuracy of this incidental statement. Part of two days would probably be occupied in journeying northwards through Bashan before reaching the neighbourhood of *Cesarea-Philippi*; thus making Luke’s account of the time at



which the transfiguration happened, to correspond to the letter with that of Matthew and Mark. There is no hint in any of the three evangelists that He returned from the east side of the Jordan till after the transfiguration; and none in Matthew or Mark of his having left the district of Cesarea-Philippi till the transfiguration had taken place. Mark, indeed, plainly intimates that He did not leave it till that great event had happened; for, immediately after relating it, he says—"And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee."

These facts settle very conclusively these two points—*first*, that the transfiguration did not occur on Tabor; and next, that it did occur somewhere about Cesarea-Philippi. If so, where could it have happened but on some one or other of the heights of Hermon? The mountain of the transfiguration was an "high mountain," and a mountain where our Lord and the three chosen disciples could be quite alone. Nowhere in all Palestine could a mountain be found that so fully meets these conditions. It is the only really "*high* mountain" in the whole land; and it is of so vast a size—a pile of mountains rather than one solitary hill—that an army might be hidden in its ample bosom. It needs not to say what an additional charm these considerations lent to the magnificent scenery of Banias. As regards the history of this remarkable place, not much is known of it previous to the times of Herod the Great. Speaking of Herod, Josephus says, that when he had conducted his patron Caesar Augustus to the sea, and was returned home, he built him a beautiful temple "near the place called Panium. This is a very fine cave in a mountain, under which there is a great cavity in the earth, and the cavern is abrupt and prodigiously deep and full of still water; over it hangs a vast mountain, and under the caverns arise springs of the Jordan. Herod adorned this place, which was already a very remarkable one, still further by the erection of this temple, which he dedicated to Cesar."* The singularly

* *Antiquities*, book xv. chap. x. § 3.



romantic spot thus alluded to was within two or three hundred yards of our tents. The temple has disappeared, but traces of the heathen worship, which gave to it the name of Panium, remain. In the face of a towering precipice of limestone rock there are two beautifully sculptured niches, and beneath them, at the base of the rock, two large artificial caverns with handsome mouldings around their mouths, also cut out of the solid rock. A Greek inscription on one of the niches speaks of the place, or the temple, as having been consecrated by the "priest of the god Pan." Masses of fallen rock and rubbish have half covered the mouths of the caverns. It is from beneath this heap of debris lying along the base of the rock that the springs of the Jordan issue forth. As if from some huge basin or fountain within the bosom of the mountain, they rush out along a space of at least 100 feet in length, and pouring their united waters into the ravine immediately in front of the rock, they form all at once a large and powerful stream of considerable depth, and at least thirty feet broad. Its volume of water is double that which issues from the other source of the Jordan at Hasbeiya, and is such, therefore, as fully to entitle it to be regarded as the main source of the river. We had seen this most illustrious of all streams falling, at the end of its course, into the Sea of Sodom; and here we now beheld its rise in the rugged sides of Hermon. The rock from the base of which it gushes out belongs to a narrow and lofty ridge, having the deep Wady Khushâbeh on the north side of it, and that of Za'arêh on the south. These parallel wadys both run down to the plain of the Hulêh; and this ridge which they inclose between them is joined on to the shoulder of Hermon eastwards by an extremely narrow neck that springs out like a mound or wall from the mass of mountains behind it. It is this peculiar position of the fountain which has given rise to so much speculation as to the source from which it is fed. Where it breaks out, as above described, it is above the level of the wadys on either hand. On the very highest point of the lofty and narrow ridge of rock out of which

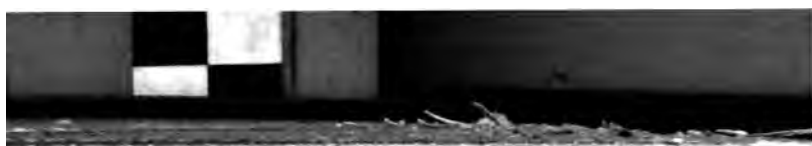


the fountain bursts, stands the Kulat-es-Subeibeh, or castle of Subeibeh, one of the grandest ruins in the world. From the site which the castle occupies, the ridge,—there only about 200 feet broad,—drops almost perpendicularly down in front, or westwards, for nearly 1000 feet, and along the two sides the descent is nearly as steep. From the brow of the precipice in front, the castle runs back along the ridge for about 1000 feet, to a point where the ridge sinks suddenly to a considerably lower level before meeting the body of the mountain behind. The origin of this vast and splendid fortress, like that of Banias itself, is entirely unknown. It comes first clearly out into the light of history at the period of the Crusades. But neither the Crusaders nor Nureddin and his Saracens, who took it from them, ever did anything more than partially restore what they found already existing. The bevelled stones and peculiar masonry of its chief foundation walls and principal tower proclaim its architecture to be Phœnician; and the most probable supposition is that it was built by that great maritime people to defend this mountain-pass, across which lay the chief thoroughfare of their trade between Damascus and their own territories on the sea-shore. There is good reason, indeed, to conclude that Banias also was of very high antiquity. It seems to have been the city to which reference is made in connection with the original conquest of Canaan, under the name sometimes of Baal-gad and sometimes of Baal-hermon. Again and again Baal-gad is mentioned as the extreme northern limit of Joshua's conquests, and it is expressly stated to have been situated "under Mount Hermon" (Josh. xiii. 5). Baal, the god of the Phœnicians and Canaanites, may have given place here to the Pan of the Greeks subsequently to the Macedonian conquest; and the place, in consequence, may thus have got its later name of Paneas, which it retained till the times of Josephus, when the son of Herod the Great enlarged and beautified it, and called it Cesarea-Philippi, to distinguish it from the other Cesarea on the sea-coast south of Carmel. Philip, the son of Herod, as the Jewish



historian tells, "built the city of Cesarea at the fountains of the Jordan, and in the region of Paneas."* To this city it was that Titus, after the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, retired for a little to repose himself from the toils of the Jewish war. Here "he exhibited all sorts of shows;" and "here a great number of the captives were destroyed, some being thrown to wild beasts, and others in multitudes forced to kill one another as if they were enemies."† This name of Cesarea-Philippi, however, by which it is known in the New Testament, at length disappeared, and its older, though not oldest name, survives to this day in its slightly altered Arabic form of Banias. Upon the whole, in so far as its known history is concerned, the one event which sheds a glory around it, is the visit and the transfiguration of our Lord. As regards the natural beauties of the scene, they can hardly be exaggerated. From the edge of the grove where our tents were pitched the view all around was of the noblest kind. Immediately behind us, on the east, and looking right down upon us from a height of 1000 feet, were the massive ruins of the singularly picturesque and majestic fortress of Subeibeh. Thousands and thousands of feet above it, and running along the whole north side of our position, towered up the mighty Hermon, his vast sides cleft by tremendous chasms and shaggy with dark woods, his swelling breast rising black and bare over these primeval forests; and higher still his broad gigantic shoulders and hoary head white with eternal snow! Who could look at him and fail to acknowledge his right to be called the *Jebel-es-Sheikh*—the mountain-monarch of the land. Hermon, as was mentioned when giving in an earlier chapter a preliminary sketch of the general structure of Palestine, is the huge *butt-end* of Anti-Libanus. It has three summits, and each of these may be regarded as the starting point of a separate range; for Anti-Libanus radiates from Hermon like a partially opened fan, in three distinct mountain chains—one running due

* *Wars*, book ii. chap. xi. § 1.† *Wars*, book vii. chap. ii. § 1.



north, and forming the east side of the great valley or plain of Coele-Syria; another running north-east to Damascus; and the third, intermediate between these two, and forming the central ridge of a vast mountain-land. But to complete this picture of Hermon, it is necessary to add that it sends off a lower range due south, along the east side of the descending Jordan valley. Bania is situated in the angle, so to speak, between this lower range and Hermon, just where the one joins on to the other. It lies, therefore, in the lap of these all but encircling hills. On the west side alone is the view open. That way it looks down, from the noble plateau on which Bania stands, to the plain of the Hulêh beneath, and away across it to the confronting hills of Kedesh-Naphtali. Such was the scenery in the midst of which we spent our last Sabbath within the limits of Palestine.

On the following morning we began our march soon after six o'clock. Our destination was Kefr-Howar, on the verge of the great plain of Damascus. To reach it our course lay right across the mountain-range that shoots off from Hermon away southward into Bashan. The path we followed became a steep ascent a few hundred yards behind Bania, and continued climbing up incessantly to higher levels, and gaining at every step more commanding views of the mountain scenery around us, and of the rich plain of the Hulêh far below. Between nine and ten o'clock we reached, in a high table-land, the little lake Er-Ram—the ancient Phiala—once supposed to be the natural reservoir that fed, through some subterranean passage, the great fountains of the Jordan at Bania. It occupies a hollow at the south end of a fine grassy plain. We spent an hour upon its banks. It is both small and shallow, and if it had any connection with the fountains of the Jordan, which seems from its position simply impossible, it would inevitably be drained in a few days. From the lake we rode up the plain northwards, very near to where it meets the mountain wall that descends from the south-eastern summit of Hermon. At this point we regained the regular Damascus road, and turned to the north-east. For an hour and



a half we continued riding along this extensive and elevated table-land, with a lofty back ridge of Hermon, flecked with snow, rising close to us on the left. After passing the Druse village of Hather, where the path begins to ascend still higher, and winding among rocky and partially wooded heights, we at length gained, about noon, the summit-level of the broad-backed range we were crossing, and got our first view of the country beyond it. Away to the south-east lay the mountains of the Haurân, and directly in front of us, in the distance, the plain of Damascus. This view, however, was soon cut off, as almost immediately we began to descend into a deep valley, which narrowed ere long into a winding rocky ravine, walled in by lofty precipices on either hand. At one o'clock we reached Beit-Jenn, where a lateral valley opens into the one we were descending. From this lateral valley rushes out the river Jenâny, which takes its rise behind the south-eastern summit of Hermon. Down the course of this rapid stream, swollen by the melting snows, we pursued our way for an hour and a half, the valley opening out as it came lower down, and showing much good cultivation along its banks. At half-past two we struck off from the left bank of the river in a direction somewhat to the north of east, along the outer base of that range of Anti-Libanus, which has been already described as running on towards Damascus. Here the cold wind blowing down from the snowy summits of the hills made us feel, for the first time, our light travelling-dresses a rather insufficient covering. At four o'clock we reached Kefr-Howar, a poor enough looking village, but embowered in a grove of magnificent walnut-trees. Close beside it a pretty stream, also descending like the Jenâny from the back of Hermon, flows down towards the plain, in which it meets that other river, and combining with it forms the Awaj—the ancient Pharpar—one of the two renowned rivers of Damascus.

Next day, Tuesday, the 12th of May, we had struck our tents and breakfasted by six A.M., and soon after we set out for



Damascus. We crossed the Sibarâny, the stream that passes Kefr-Howar, immediately beneath the village, and beyond it entered on a naked, dreary, moorish, scrubby, undulating country, which it took us three tedious hours to traverse. On its farther side we passed all at once from a wilderness into a garden. At first patches of verdure are seen here and there, watered by little rivulets issuing from a tributary of the Sibarâny. Very soon, on gaining a little rising ground, the rich and magnificent plain of Damascus opens into view, the white minarets of the city shining out brightly at a distance of eleven or twelve miles above the dark sea of foliage which covers the whole country around it. A little farther on, we found our path traversed by a strong stream, drawn off from the Awaj, or Pharpar, to irrigate the plain. Here, a little to the right or south, near some low hills, is a detached conical hill or tell, on which stands the half-ruinous village of Jûneh—or Jauneh, as our muleteers called it—and which is noticeable as marking the line by which the direct caravan road from Jerusalem enters the plain of Damascus. It is beside that tell, on coming out through a pass in a range of low hills, that the traveller by that road gets his earliest view of Damascus. For this reason it is that the spot has been singled out by a not improbable tradition as the scene of the conversion of St. Paul.

From the point at which we had now arrived, it was determined to send forward Mr. Brown, accompanied by Gaetano and two of the muleteers, with the baggage, in advance of our party, to secure apartments and to make other necessary arrangements for our accommodation at Damascus. The rest of us sat down accordingly on the banks of the stream close to the village of Artûz, many of whose inhabitants came out to look at us. The females were especially anxious to examine the dress of the ladies, and were not unwilling to exhibit their own ornaments, which consisted chiefly of massive silver bracelets, armlets, and strings of coins fastened round their heads. Gloves seemed especially



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to astonish and interest them. They were all perfectly good-natured and civil.

At half-past eleven A.M. we moved on, and immediately after crossing the stream at which we had halted, found ourselves amid a network of canals and rivulets that water the entire plain onwards to Damascus. Nothing can exceed its fertility. It is covered all over with rich crops of grain, and interspersed with groves and gardens of fruit trees, which became more and more numerous as we advanced, until at length they gathered into one continuous mass of foliage, encircling the city for miles round and round. About two o'clock we entered Damascus, the oldest of inhabited cities, by the *gate of God*—the *Buwaibet Ullah*—and rode down the Meidan, a broad and straight street of two miles in length, at the end of which we entered the winding and narrow street of the bazaars, for the most part roofed over, and finally, at a little before three P.M., arrived at the door of the Locanda, where Gaetano was waiting to receive us.



CHAPTER X.

Damascus—Its antiquity—Its present condition—Its houses, streets, and bazaars—The Great Mosque—The khans—The rivers Abana and Pharpar—The surrounding country—Leave the city—Ascend the course of the Barada—Abila—Zebedany—The mountain ranges of Anti-Libanus—Baalbek—Remains of the ancient temples, their origin and history—Cross Coele-Syria—Ain-Ata—Mount Lebanon—The cedars—Bshehreh—Ehden—Tripoli—Re-embark in the *St. Ursula*—Visit Beyrout—Sail for Malta.

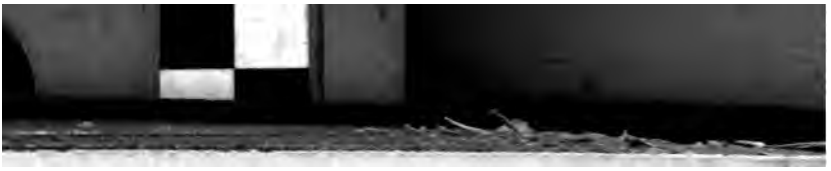
THE Locanda was reported to be full; but we made our way in notwithstanding. It had an unpromising look about it. Without and within, its courts and its chambers had all the same faded, dingy, back-going appearance; indicating either poverty or mismanagement. While we were examining the only apartments which, as we were told, "mine host" had to offer us—apartments whose tawdry ornaments and crazy furniture, and dirty carpets, were anything but inviting—we were suddenly relieved from our perplexities by the entrance of the Rev. Mr. Robson, the well-known missionary of Damascus, whom Mr. Brown had informed of our coming, and who had already, with true Irish heartiness and hospitality, made arrangements elsewhere for the accommodation of us all. The two other ladies of the party, my wife, and myself, were kindly received under Mr. Robson's own roof. Mr. Brown and Mr. Stevenson were consigned to the care of some of the other gentlemen connected with the mission. It is impossible to imagine a greater contrast than between the outside and the inside of the houses of Damascus. Outside you have a blind wall built up with stone to the height of eight, ten, or twelve feet, and above this a frame of wood plastered with clay. Passing through this wall by a small strong door, you find yourself in an outer court, around which usually are the apartments of the servants. Beyond this you enter the inner court, paved with



different coloured marbles; a large marble fountain in the centre, with fresh water gushing into it; an alcove on one side with Persian carpets on the floor, and handsome divans round the walls; flowers, and shrubs, and orange trees growing in the angles of the court, and filling it with fragrance and beauty. The house itself occupies the sides of the court, into which all its apartments are so arranged as to look; and frequently the house has a broad viranda, supported on pillars, running along two or three sides of the court; the pillars which support it wreathed with flowering creepers. Into this viranda, the family apartments open at the height of one storey from the ground; and here, shaded from the sun by the projecting viranda-roof, sitting in the open air, looking down on the cool, clear waters of the fountain, and regaled with the sweet odour of the flowers, the members of the family pass many of their hours.

But I must not attempt to describe Damascus, either in general or in detail. The subject is too large, and these "Notes" have already extended so far, that for the present, at least, I must abandon the attempt. A few brief and random particulars are all for which I have now either time or room. When, or by whom the city was founded, cannot be certainly known, though Josephus says it was founded by Uz, one of the four sons of Aram, who was the grandson of Noah.* It was already a well-known city, at least as early as the days of Abraham, for the steward of his house was "Eliezer of Damascus;" and now, after the lapse of nearly 4000 years, it is still full of life and vigour—a great mart of commerce, a seat of extensive manufactures, the chief Asiatic city of the Turkish empire, and possessing a population of 150,000 souls. The plain in which it stands is 2200 feet above the level of the sea. Along the north-western side of the plain runs, like a wall, for thirty-five miles, the easternmost range of Anti-Libanus. The average

* *Antiquities*, book i. chap. vi. § 4.



height of this range is not more than 600 or 800 feet above the plain, though immediately opposite Damascus it rises to about 1500 feet. The plain is thirty miles in length, and eight or ten in breadth. A line of low hills all but shuts it in on the west, and sweeps away round it on the south; while on the east it passes on unimpeded till it is gradually lost in the desert. Damascus lies on the north-eastern side of the plain, within two miles of the Anti-Libanus chain of hills. The perfect forest of gardens, in the midst of which the city lies, yields almost all kinds of fruits—the quince, apple, apricot, almond, peach, plum, fig, mulberry, pear, pomegranate, olive, walnut, orange, lemon, citron, vine, and hazel and pistachio nuts. Vegetables of all sorts are equally abundant. Farther out from the city, rich crops of grain cover the whole face of the country. For this amazing fertility the plain is indebted not only to its fine deep clayey soil, but especially to its complete irrigation by the ancient Abana and Pharpar, those “rivers of Damascus” which Naaman the Syrian not without reason pronounced to be “better than all the rivers of Israel.” The Abana, being first named, is supposed to have been the chief of the two, and is identified accordingly with the Barada, which, taking its rise far away in the heart of the mountain-ranges of Anti-Libanus, bursts out through a tremendous gorge in the hills, about two miles to the north-west of Damascus, and rushes down into the plain. The Pharpar, which is identified with the modern Awaj, enters the plain, as formerly stated, at its western extremity, and pursuing its course eastward and to the south of the city, sends what remains of it, after watering the country through which it passes, into the Bahret-Hijaneh—the southernmost of the three lakes that lie to the east of Damascus. That part of the plain, therefore, in which Damascus lies, and the city itself, are indebted for the ample supply of water they enjoy entirely to the Barada, whose endlessly subdivided streams not only find their way into every field and garden around the city, but into every street and every court of a house within the city itself. Beyond

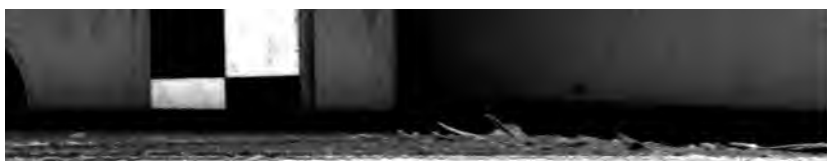


the city its reunited waters flow eastwards, and finally fall partly into the Bahret-es-Shurkiyeh, and partly into the Bahret-el-Kibliyeh, the other two of those three lakes to which reference has been already made.

Escorted by Mr. Robson, we made on the following day a complete tour of the city. Its most noticeable building is the great mosque, formerly the church of John the Baptist. From the remains of great columns in the vicinity of the mosque, built in their broken and mutilated condition into the walls of the houses in the adjoining streets, it is supposed that the church must have been erected on the site of a heathen temple to which these colonnades had belonged. The mosque is surrounded by a perfect labyrinth of covered bazaars. As we approached its eastern entrance, to look into its outer court, a fanatic and furious Moslem, offended by our proximity to the holy place, shouted and gesticulated with great vehemence to drive us away. It is of great extent, and has several fine ranges of columns and arches, but it is a poor thing compared with the mosque of Mohammed Ali at Cairo.

On one side of it is the bazaar of the silversmiths, one of the most singular sights in the city. Each man of the craft has his own forge, and a small box containing his jewellery beside it, and is both manufacturer and merchant himself. The bazaar, in short, is one huge, cavernous-looking workshop, where several hundred men are blowing their fires, and handling their tools, and selling their wares. They are all Christians; and through their kindness we were allowed to ascend by a broken stair to the roof of their bazaar, which joins on to the wall of the mosque, and where we had a much better view of it, as well as of the whole city lying around it.

It were vain to attempt to describe the miles of narrow, covered, and half dark lanes which constitute the bazaars of the city. Shoemakers, blacksmiths, confectioners, fruiterers, tailors, haberdashers, saddlers, &c., &c., have each a bazaar peculiar to their own craft. The throng in these bazaars is



excessive, especially in the department where fine dresses are sold. It required a constant effort to force or insinuate one's self through the dense mass of buyers and sellers. As the Oriental merchant never dreams of naming, at the first, the sum he is prepared ultimately to accept as the price of his wares, and usually sets out by naming a sum 200 or 300 per cent. above it, the process of arriving at an agreement is long and circuitous. Half the time of the Damascenes must be spent "higgling" in the bazaars. But they are not in a hurry, and seem to like the excitement of this game of talk. It suits both their indolence and their volubility.

Here and there throughout the city there are great khans—something of the nature of our exchanges—where merchants of a particular class congregate, show their goods, and also expose them to sale. In the course of our interesting stroll through the town we visited the English consulate. The consul had gone to England, but his deputy, Mr. Misk, kindly supplied us with letters to his private agent at Baalbek, and to the Emir of the district, the present head of the old Harfûsh family, that has been dominant in that part of the country for 700 years. Our object in providing ourselves with these letters was to make sure of obtaining at Baalbek a competent and trustworthy guide, to conduct us across the passes of the Lebanon. We were told by several travellers whom we met, and even by our friends in Damascus, that the pass to the cedars was not likely to be practicable so early in the season, on account of the snow. Mr. Misk assured us his agent or the Emir Harfûsh would ascertain for us with certainty whether this was the case, and put us in the way of reaching the cedars, if anyhow it could be done.

In the afternoon we rode round the environs of the city to visit some of the places which tradition associates with certain Scripture scenes. In the course of our ride we passed the very spot where Paul was struck to the earth by the celestial vision! The tradition is entirely worthless. This alleged locality of



Paul's conversion is on the east side of the city, though we know he approached it from the west. The far more probable conjecture is that which, as already noticed, places the scene of that great event where the road from Jerusalem first brings the city into view. In the same neighbourhood we were shown the place where he was let down over the wall in a basket; and near to it the tomb of St. George, the porter, who, it seems, had charge of the gate on the night of Paul's escape, and aided him in his flight. To this tomb every funeral procession of Christians of the Oriental churches in Damascus pays a visit. In returning to the city we re-entered it by the ancient gate that leads into the street "called Straight." There can be no doubt this is the street of that name. The remains of the colonnades, corresponding to the three portals in the gateway at the end of it, which run along its sides, and which mark its course in a right line from east to west, can still be traced. The modern street does not preserve quite so straight a course.

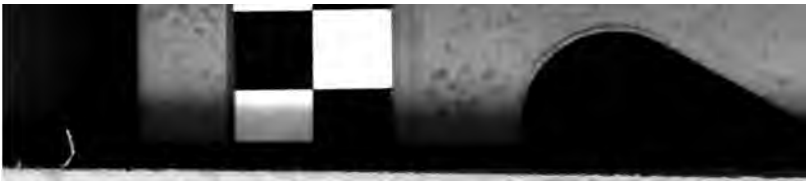
Late at night, and again conducted by Mr. Robson—without whose presence the expedition might not have been safe—we walked over a great part of the city, to witness the keeping of the Ramadân. It is at night, during that season, that the Moslems feast and grow merry. There was really not much to see. The streets were very quiet and quite dark, save where, at confectionery shops and cafés, the people were regaling themselves with sweetmeats, coffee, and sherbet. The streets were everywhere literally littered with dogs—the only scavengers the city maintains. In consideration of their services in this department, they appear to have full license to lie and sleep where they choose. The grandest café we visited, and one much celebrated by travellers, we found to be, after all, a rather paltry affair. A large branch of the river runs through its courts and gardens. It has arbours and fountains, and many of the trees around it were hung with lamps. But there was an air of shabbiness about the whole place, as if its day had gone by. It has been spoken of as almost realizing some of the scenes in *The Arabian*



Nights; but to do this it must be largely aided by a very lively imagination.

Mr. Tennent, accompanied from the yacht by Mrs. H. P. and Miss L., had arrived in Damascus several days before us. They had crossed the mountains from Beyrout, and were to return, like ourselves, by way of Baalbek, to the sea coast at Tripoli, where the yacht was to await our coming. Having finished their survey of the city, they left it the morning after we came. We resolved to follow them on the succeeding day, and made our arrangements accordingly. The personal guidance, and the minute local knowledge of Mr. Robson, enabled us to make the most of our limited time, while his company, and that of his amiable and estimable lady, rendered our visit to Damascus one of pure enjoyment. The mission, of which he is a distinguished member, includes Dr. Porter, and consists of five ordained ministers. Three of them belong to the Irish Presbyterian Church, and the two others to the associated Synod of the Presbyterian Church in America. There is also a medical gentleman attached to the mission. They are carrying on a great and hopeful work. Their presence and influence is felt not only all through Damascus, but in various ways, and by many agencies, far and wide around it. It was with truly grateful feelings, and with sincere regrets, we parted from these esteemed and valued friends, whose personal attentions to us all we could not sufficiently acknowledge.

At ten A.M., on Thursday, the 15th May, we bade farewell to Damascus. An hour afterwards we were standing on the ridge of the hills beyond it, taking a last look, from the Kubbet-Seiyar, of the ancient capital of Syria—where the Benhadads, and the Seleucids, and the Cæsars, and the Ommeyyade Caliphs, and Tamerlane, and the Turk, have successively ruled, and which still continues, after mighty dynasties have passed away, to lift itself proudly above the ocean of verdure on which it seems to float, like a white ship upon a dark green sea. The cupola-shaped, temple-like little structure, from between whose open arcades we feasted our eyes on that noble sight, stands on the very brink



of the precipitous gorge, far down in the bottom of which the foaming Barada escapes through the last range of Anti-Libanus, and descends into the plain. The path across this range of chalk hills, nearly as white as snow, is both blinding to the eyes and perilous to ride upon. On the farther side of the ridge especially, where it descends to the banks of the river at Dummar, the road is both slippery and steep, the hill-side being little else than naked rock. A little farther on we crossed the river, and after ascending its right bank for about a mile, we struck away westwards across a naked stony upland country, crossed occasionally by green and wooded ravines, but bleak in the main, and surrounded on all sides by a vast encircling sea of white limestone hills. About three P.M. we again fell into the river's course, which below this point sweeps away in a great curve to our right, to receive a magnificent contribution to its waters from the famous fountain of Fijeh, which sends out, all at once, a stream thirty feet wide and from three to four feet in depth. Our route rejoined the river a little below the gigantic cleft by which the Barada makes its way through the middle chain of the mountains of Anti-Libanus. The scenery here is exceedingly grand. The road skirts along the right or south bank of the river, hemmed in between it and a tall perpendicular cliff, not less than 800 feet in height. Far up the face of the cliff is the Wely-Habil, or tomb of Abel, as the Arabs call it: for they hold it to be the tomb in which Abel was buried by his brother Cain. In reality, there can be little doubt that the name is simply a corruption of Abila, the chief city of the district of Abilene, of which we read, in the gospel of Luke, that Lysanias was tetrarch at the time when John the Baptist began his public ministry. Abila was situated in this magnificent defile, not far probably from the place where the picturesque village of Sûk-Wady-Barada now hangs on a sort of shelf, between the base of the cliff and the stream. The defile is so narrow, and the rock faces on either hand so precipitous, and so like one another, as to suggest the idea of the mountain range having



been rent asunder by volcanic force. There are many rock-tombs and inscriptions in the face of these cliffs, some of which date as far back as the second century. Where the gorge is narrowest, its opposite sides are united by a good bridge of a single arch, which spans the yawning chasm down which the raging river boils and roars along its confined and rugged bed.

By this bridge we gained the left bank of the Barada, which we followed all the way to its source at Zebedâny, where we passed the night. The valley which it descends, before entering the gorge now described, and in which Zebedâny is situated, lies between the middle and the western ranges of Anti-Libanus. As we rode northwards, up this sweet sequestered valley, we had the snow-clad summits of Hermon towering up behind us to the south; looking down over all the other mountain ranges which branch off from it, and which form the great mountain region of Anti-Libanus, through the very heart of which our journey lay, all the way from Damascus to Baalbek. It had grown quite dark before we reached Zebedâny, which lies hidden in its nest, at the head of the valley, amid vineyards and olive groves, and surrounded by a perfect network of mountain streams.

On the following morning, after an early breakfast before striking our tents, we started for Baalbek. Our course lay still northwards, and between the same lofty ranges of mountains, spotted here and there with snow, that inclose the valley of Zebedâny. We left that place at half-past six A.M., and at half-past nine A.M. we had reached the water-shed of this mountainous region. Hitherto all the little streamlets had been flowing southwards to the Barada. Here they began to take a northward course, gathering as they advanced into a considerable stream, which at length finds an exit for itself through the westernmost range of Anti-Libanus into Cœle-Syria, or the great plain of the Buka'a. The mountain pass through which it thus escapes is the Wady-Yafûfeh, a defile quite different in character from that of Abila, but hardly less picturesque and sublime. Issuing out from this wady into the Buka'a, the



mountain stream falls into the Litâny,—the ancient Leontes,—and thus ultimately reaches the Mediterranean, a little to the north of Tyre. The Wady-Yafûfeh breaks out through Anti-Libanus from east to west. Our route conducted us along the north side of this valley, high up the mountain side, with an abyss of 1000 feet below us on the left, and the steep mountain face rising high above us on the right. It was from the opening out of this wady, and looking away across the broad and deep valley or plain of the Buka'a we got our first view of Jebel-Sunnin, one of the loftiest summits of the Lebanon, covered with unbroken snow. Instead of descending like the stream below us into the plain, our path rounding upwards out of the Wady-Yafûfeh, held on northwards among the lower levels of Anti-Libanus, but still far above its base. At length, about four P.M. we emerged from the roots of this great mountain chain through a little opening in a low ridge, immediately above the plain, and found ourselves in full view of the ruins of Baalbek. It is not easy, all at once, and at a distance, correctly to estimate their size. In the presence of these great works of God,—the vast plain of Cœle-Syria, walled in by the stupendous snow-clad mountains of Lebanon and Anti-Libanus,—even the mightiest of the works of man look very small. Dwarfed by the magnitude of surrounding objects, the remains of the noble and lofty peristyle of the great temple of Baalbek—six tall columns with their massive entablature, seventy-six feet high, and fully seven feet in diameter, and standing, at the same time, on the top of a cyclopean substruction wall that rises fifty feet above the plain,—they still seemed, at the distance of two miles, from which we first got sight of them, almost disappointingly small. A nearer approach soon entirely removed this first momentary impression, and left us filled with astonishment and admiration while viewing that rare, and perhaps unexampled combination of colossal magnitude with exquisite symmetry which these temples display.

The entire breadth of the plain from Baalbek over to the base



of the opposite mountain chain of the Lebanon is ten or twelve miles. The length of this plain, north and south, between these stupendous mountain walls may be estimated at not less than eighty miles. It is, in fact, an enlarged continuation of the Jordan valley, rising always to a higher level as it advances northwards, till it reaches Baalbek, which is near the water-shed, and where the plain on which the ruins stand has attained a height of 3769 feet above the level of the sea.

Having respect to the character of the surrounding scenery, the site for the temples has been most skilfully chosen. Where all nature appears on so gigantic a scale, mass was indispensable; but to have placed any building, however large, among the roots of Anti-Libanus, would have been to sink it into insignificance. The town of Baalbek itself ran up the slope of the first low hill that rises out of the plain; but the builders of the temples, with a true genius for architectural effect, placed them in front of the city, half a mile out upon the plain itself. Even here, however, on the broad bosom of the plain, there was yet another difficulty to be surmounted. The temples would be wanting in elevation if set down on the flat surface of the ground. To surmount this disadvantage they have been reared upon substructions which, as already noticed, elevate the base of the great temple nearly fifty feet above the level of the plain. The site which the ruins cover is about a quarter of a mile in length, and from 700 to 800 feet in breadth. This entire area has been partly mounded and partly built up with massive walls and arched-work; and the whole has been inclosed and supported with outer walls of such ponderous masonry as makes one wonder, even in an age like ours, how it could ever have been put together by human hands. In the outer substruction wall, beneath the northern base of the great temple, there are nine single stones, each of which is 31 feet in length, and 13 feet by 9½ feet in thickness. In the outer substruction wall, beneath the western part of the temple, there are three stones forming a course in the wall, each of which is upwards of 63 feet in length



and 13 feet in depth. These, no doubt, were the stones which gave to the temple the name of the *Τριλιθον*—the “Three-stoned.” To add to the astonishment which the sight of these rock-like masses creates, they are not the foundation stones of the wall, but occupy a position 20 feet above the ground.

Upon the raised platform upheld by that stupendous masonry stood the temples of this ancient Heliopolis, or “City of the Sun.” How majestically from that elevation must they have looked down on the broad plain beneath. From the base of the western substruction wall to the top of the massive entablature which ran along the head of the columns that formed the peristyle of the great temple, the height must have been 124 feet. Of that noble colonnade only six pillars remain. The rest, hurled from their pedestals by successive earthquakes, and broken in pieces by their fall, lie, shafts here and capitals there, a perfect picture of desolation.

Having walked all round the outside of the ruins to survey the exterior aspect of this wonderful place, we then climbed up through a breach in the southern wall, and got in among the ruins themselves. They have been too often sketched, and photographed, and elaborately described to need that I should enter into details, which, indeed, without a ground plan of the buildings, it would be difficult to make intelligible. Of the great temple not much remains. Its main entrance was towards the east, where it seems to have been approached by a massive flight of steps that led first into a spacious portico, having a front of 180 feet in length, and a depth of 37 feet. Of the columns that ran along this noble portico only the bases remain. Through the back wall of this portico a triple gateway opens into a noble hexagonal court, having a diameter of 200 feet. Passing through this first court, a portal of 50 feet wide, with a smaller entrance 10 feet wide on either side of it, we enter the grand court immediately in front of the temple itself. This main court is 440 feet in length by 370 in breadth. Along its side walls are large niches for statues, and rectangular recesses with columns in front



of them, but all half in ruins. Immediately beyond this great quadrangle, westwards, stood the temple itself, encircled by its lofty peristyle, and measuring 290 feet long by 160 broad, and thus making the entire length of this magnificent structure, from the portico on the east to the western colonnade of the temple, rather more than 1000 feet.

The other and smaller temple is much more entire. It is near the south-western angle of the vast area which the ruins cover, and is 227 feet in length by 117 in breadth. The entire *cella* or body of the temple remains. Of the noble colonnade or peristyle that ran round its walls—consisting originally of forty-six columns, fifteen on each side and eight at each end—only fifteen remain, viz., six on the west and nine on the north. They are 65 feet in height, and $6\frac{1}{4}$ feet in diameter at the base. The south side has been stripped of its columns, which the earthquake has shaken from their pedestals, and tossed down to the bottom of the lofty substruction wall on which the temple stands. On that side but one solitary column remains, which the shock of the earthquake has thrown backwards against the temple wall; and though it has done so with such violence as to dash in several massive stones of the wall, the pillar itself is unbroken. The shaft of the column consists of three pieces, but so firmly are they jointed together that it remains as entire as if it had been formed of a single stone. The gem of these magnificent architectural remains is the main portal of this smaller temple. This portal fronts the east, and is 21 feet wide by 42 feet high. Each side of the doorway is a single stone, and all round it has a broad border of carved work of exquisite beauty. On the under surface of the lintel is the figure of an eagle—not the Roman eagle, but the same that appears on the great temple of the sun at Palmyra, and supposed, in consequence, to have been one of the characteristic symbols of sun-worship. There is a cork-screw stair within the wall on one side of the gateway, to which two or three of us got access by creeping through a most uncomfortably narrow hole, and by which we climbed up to the top of the



walls of the temple. The key-stone of the lintel of the lofty and beautiful portal has been in the act of dropping out during the convulsions of some earthquake; but the gaping wall has closed in time to catch it by its upper edge, and there it hangs more perilous-looking than the sword of Damocles when one is beneath it in the doorway; and yet, standing upon it above, we found it immoveable as a rock.

Two inscriptions remain on the front of the great temple, which leave no room to doubt that the magnificent edifices, of the ruins of which I have now spoken, were erected by the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius, in the second century of the Christian era. Though no writer of older date than the seventh century notices the building of these temples, the evidence—from the inscriptions above mentioned, from coins, and from the style of the architecture—upon which they are ascribed to the Emperor Antoninus may be considered as complete. It is not less certain, however, that these were not the original temples of Baalbek. This Syrian Heliopolis is known, from authentic history, to have existed for long centuries before the times of Antoninus. The masonry of the substruction walls and underground arches of the temples, is of quite a different character from that of the temples themselves. It is, most probably, Phœnician; and Baalbek was not unlikely the original name of the place. That of Heliopolis may have come in after the Macedonian conquest, as the Greek equivalent for the older Phœnician word. As in the case of Banias, however, the intermediate name has passed away, while the older name, preserved perhaps all along among the natives of the country, has been again restored. The architecture of these temples, in its perfect state, must have been one of the wonders of the world; but in their history, so far as it is known, there is little to awaken sympathy, and much to excite abhorrence. They were the scene, in the earlier centuries of the Christian era, of the most disgusting abominations, and of the most brutal persecutions. Nowhere did idolatry exhibit more hideous obscenities than here, and



nowhere did it display a more intense and cruel hatred to the followers of the true and holy faith of the gospel. In the midst of these temples pollutions were systematically practised of which "it were a shame even to speak;" and beneath the shadow of these walls Christian martyrs have been subjected to the most savage tortures, and put to the most revolting deaths. The martyrs died, but the faith for which they suffered lives. Those rent walls, and broken pillars, and heaps of shapeless ruin, are emblems of the destiny that is awaiting every system of idolatry that exists on earth. Christianity has its emblem in these everlasting hills. In the course of the evening we had an interview with Mr. Pharez Raphael, the agent of Mr. Misk, of Damascus. The letter we brought had been sent to him immediately on our arrival, and he came to us while we were still among the ruins. Already he had secured for us a guide. This guide was himself a native of the Lebanon, familiar with the mountain passes, and, as Mr. Raphael assured us, a man of good character, and in whose hands he could place us with the most perfect confidence. He was a Maronite Christian, Tantis by name, a strong made sagacious-looking man. He had himself, he told us, come across the mountain with baggage horses only four days before, and undertook, without the least hesitation, to conduct us by the direct route over Jebel-Makhmel to the cedars. He had come with Mr. Raphael to be introduced to us, and to take our orders, and we engaged him at once. The only regret we felt was, that this promptitude with which the affair had been settled deprived us of the opportunity of seeing the Emir. We had now no excuse for troubling him. It seemed, moreover, as if it would have cost some time to arrange the interview, and we had none to spare.

We left our tents next morning at six o'clock, to visit the beautiful fountains of Baalbek. To reach them we passed through the modern village which occupies part of the site of the ancient city. The city, as already noticed, stood on the slope of the first low hill that rises out of the plain. The old

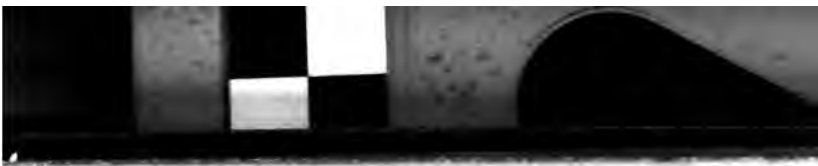


city wall seems to have begun at the two opposite extremities of the temple area, and to have passed over, in two parallel lines, to the hills; ascending which, it swept all round the city. Extensive remains of it still exist. The low hill on which the city chiefly stood, is cleft by a sweet little valley or ravine, at the head of which rises the fountain, at a distance of a mile and a half from the temples in the plain. The powerful and beautifully bright stream that issues from the fountain rushes down through this valley into the plain, where its waters are parted in two, and flow round opposite sides of the temple area. Beyond this they are led forth in little rivulets to irrigate the broad plain outside, and in which they are entirely absorbed. The village is chiefly inhabited by a tribe called the Metâwileh, the followers of the old Harfûsh family, and a very turbulent race. To our great surprise we found our friend Mr. Tennent and his party in the village. Being fatigued with their previous journey, they had rested for a day here at Baalbek. Before our arrival, however, they had made their arrangements for crossing the Lebanon by a lower pass than the one that leads direct to the cedars, by which they promised themselves a less toilsome ride. They started at half-past eight A.M., about an hour before us, and took a course nearly due west across the plain. Our route lay north-west in the direction of Ain-Ata, where we intended to encamp that evening, and to remain over the Sabbath.

North of Baalbek the great plain of the Buks'a, or Cœle-Syria, contracts immediately—a great breadth of barren, undulating ground stretching far out upon it from the roots of Anti-Libanus. It is in the midst of that broken ground, about twelve or fifteen miles north of Baalbek, that the streams begin to flow northwards towards Lake Hums, the ancient Emesa. Between Baalbek and that lake the principal river has the name of the Nahr-el-Asy. Beyond the lake it becomes the Orontes, which, sweeping round the north end of Lebanon, and passing the city of Antioch, enters the Mediterranean Sea. In crossing the plain we witnessed a fine specimen of that strange optical illusion, the



mirage. A few miles south from our line of march a lake seemed to spread out before us, with bold shores and wooded headlands projecting into it, though in reality not a drop of water exists where this fairy scene appeared. The plain, like that of Jezreel, resembles one vast, interminable field,—there being no fences, hedgerows, or other visible landmarks to break its uniform aspect. It is but very partially cultivated, much the greater part of it being in a state of nature. “Fixity of tenure” is unknown in Syria. The land is a mere common. Each tribe or family crops or pastures, in their own slovenly way, as much as suits them; and as long as they do so, and pay the government tax, it is theirs. Inducement to improve the land there is none. If it is made to yield more than it did, the pasha’s armed tax-gatherers demand a heavier payment and “sorn” upon the unfortunate improvers, till it is paid. There are, besides, no roads or other facilities for sending their crops to a market, and there is no mercantile or manufacturing population in the country to consume and pay for the extra produce. This magnificent plain of the Buka’a, which, if it ran through the heart of France or England would be swarming with people, is all but uninhabited. From one end to the other it contains only a few miserable villages, such as one might pass through it without ever noticing. One of these, Deir-el-Akhmar, lies at the point where the path by which we crossed the plain from Baalbek touches the base of Lebanon. This magnificent mountain chain consists, on its eastern side, of a lower and a higher range, conspicuously marked off from one another. The lower range, at the foot of which we had now arrived, slopes up gradually, and is clothed all over with thick woods, chiefly the Scindiân oak. The upper range is bare and naked, and springs up like a wall. The top of this upper range was covered all along with unbroken snow—broad patches and long streaks of which spotted its sides. Nothing could be more pleasing than the scenery of the lower range through which the ascending path led us;—now winding through dark forest glades, now climbing up the sides of some deep and



lonely dell, now coming out on beautiful grassy plateaus, embosomed amid rocks and woods; and every now and then, from some open space in the ascent, affording the most glorious views of the plain below, and of the noble mountains of Anti-Libanus beyond it. In the very heart of this romantic scenery we arrived at the village of our guide Tanûs. He conducted us immediately to his house, which seemed to be the best in the little hamlet to which it belonged. It had a rustic portico in front, roofed over and floored with nice clean matting. Here he and his wife, who had rushed out to meet him, immediately arranged a number of cushions which they brought from the house, and then invited us to sit down. The place was most inviting, and we gladly accepted the invitation. While we were enjoying the rest and the shade, and the splendid prospect that lay spread out around and beneath us, the wife of Tanûs, "on hospitable thoughts intent," had meanwhile disappeared. Within a few minutes thereafter the crackling and sputtering of a wood-fire was heard at the end of the cottage, and clouds of smoke came rolling past the portico, half blinding us, and wholly shutting out the view. On passing round the cottage to reclaim against this nuisance, we were not a little interested by the operation which we there saw going on. The good woman was preparing for us some fresh bread. Within a large earthen pot sunk in the ground, a fire of dry sticks had been kindled, which, by stirring and feeding, had been kept fiercely burning, till the pot had become thoroughly heated. The ashes were then swept out, the sides of the pot wiped clean, and the little round wheaten cakes, which meanwhile had been prepared, were dabbed on in circles round the inner surface of the pot, to which they adhered, and where, in five minutes, the simple process of baking was complete. On returning to the portico we found several jars of excellent milk awaiting us, which, along with the fresh bread, made a most satisfactory repast; seasoned as it was by the cordial kindness of Tanûs and his wife, and indeed of the whole inhabitants of the little hamlet, who all



gathered around us, and vied with one another in their little civilities.

Shortly afterwards we were surprised to find our hostess in tears. On inquiring into her distress we learned, for the first time, that two of the mountain tribes, through whose territories we were about to pass, were at feud with one another. Tanús belonged to one of these tribes, and the engagement he had made with us at Baalbek bound him to conduct us to Ehden, the chief town of the other tribe with which his own was at war. It was hearing of this engagement that had set his wife a-weeping. At her urgent request he suggested the idea of our taking one of his sons, a lad of sixteen years of age, in his stead; but we at once declined the proposal. He had made the engagement with his eyes open. He knew the state of the country though we did not. Had he made any difficulty about conducting us through it before we started from Baalbek, we should have released him at once. We could there have made sure of getting another guide, of proper qualifications, to take his place. With so many ladies in our party we could not, as we told him, consent to run any unnecessary risks, and that we must therefore insist on his going himself. He admitted at once that what we said was perfectly just and reasonable, apologized for having given way to his wife's fears, and said he was ready to attend us. Having soothed his wife as best we could, we left the village about three P.M., and resumed our journey. In many places, as we ascended the mountain, the wood was so thick that it was with difficulty we could ride through it without breaking our heads, or scratching out our eyes, among the intermingling branches of the trees. In about an hour and a half we had gained the crest of this lower range of the Lebanon, beyond which we found a broad valley sloping away southwards between the lower and the upper range of the mountain, towards a deep hollow, in which lay a very pretty lake, called Leimôn. Ain-Ata, our destination for the night, was immediately before us—right across this broad valley, and close in at the base of the



upper range of Lebanon. We reached the village about five P.M., and pitched our tents within a little walled inclosure close beside it. A strong wind sweeping down the sides of the mountain, was blowing in strong gusts along the valley, and the walls of the inclosure promised to afford some protection to our tents. So soon as we arrived, the villagers crowded around us, evidently in a state of great excitement, the young men carrying their weapons ostentatiously in their hands. One of the women was weeping bitterly for her son, of whose death she had just heard. He and another of the Ain-Ata people had been shot on the other side of the mountain, in a fight with the Ehden people, a day or two before.

We found it very cold at Ain-Ata. The place is between 5000 and 6000 feet above the level of the sea, and the snow was lying in broad masses on the mountain side, not many hundred feet above us. Here we spent the following day, Sabbath, the 17th of May. Tanús, with our consent, had gone back to his village on the Saturday evening, under a promise to be at our tents by day-break on Monday morning. After what we had now witnessed at Ain-Ata, we sometimes feared that we had seen the last of our guide; though his honest face, and quiet manly bearing, made us all most unwilling to give way to any suspicion regarding him. Ahmed and Gaetano were confident he would disappoint us, but they were wrong. While we were striking our tents on Monday morning, soon after five A.M., Tanús appeared. Often had I looked up the steep mountain side in the course of the preceding day, and wondered how we were ever to reach the summit. To get our baggage horses up such an ascent seemed to me utterly hopeless. It did cost Ahmed one of his beasts, which fairly broke down and died. Another horse, however, was procured from the Ain-Ata people, and the achievement was accomplished. We started at six o'clock, and at eight we were on the mountain top. Without the aid of two extra guides, whom we took from Ain-Ata, we should hardly have succeeded. Their minute local knowledge enabled



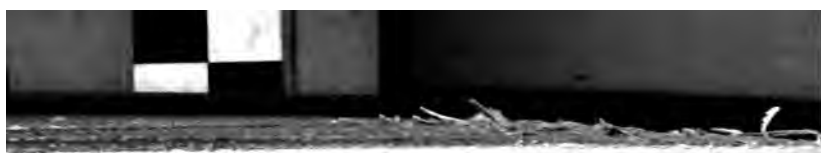
them to take advantage of every twist and turn of the hill-side where a better footing could be gained; and to lead us, either through between the deep snow wreaths, or to places where they could be crossed with safety. As we approached the summit of the mountain, our path lay over unbroken snow.

Never shall I forget, while memory lasts, the magnificence of the view which burst upon us when we suddenly turned the narrow ridge of the mountain. Before gaining this point we had many times turned round to gaze with rapture on the scene we were leaving behind; the shaggy range of the Lower Lebanon at our feet, the noble far-reaching plain of the Buka's still farther down, and away beyond it the lofty ranges of Anti-Libanus—a boundless sea of mountains, stretching onwards till they faded away upon the far-off eastern horizon. But grand as this view was, it seemed almost tame and common-place in comparison with the wonderful and glorious sight that opened upon us when we at length reached the summit of this gigantic mountain wall, and looked over to the other side. The height of the ridge on which we now stood, according to Schubert's measurement, is 7624 feet above the level of the sea. Though the range of the Lebanon is of immense breadth, the ridge line at this particular point is so narrow as almost to resemble the top of a wall. This singular peculiarity is caused by the immense gash made by the valley of the Kadisha, which here nearly cuts the mountain through. We were now standing at the top, and on the very brink of this tremendous crevasse, which descends rapidly to the broad and beautiful plain that stretches out from the western base of the mountain, to the sea-shore at Tripoli. It is made up of a succession of vast basins or cavities, with sudden breaks or precipices dropping sheer down from one to another, and walled in, all the way down, by mountain heights, overhanging this abyss on either hand. The bottom of the uppermost of these large cavities lay about 1000 feet beneath us. Sweeping forward from the point where we stood, the mountain incloses it on two sides, rising at the same time several thousand feet higher above it than at the point



where we stood. We were therefore looking down into this enormous cavity, and away downwards and onwards to the plain and the sea, between these stupendous heights. It is among these heights the Lebanon attains its loftiest elevation—the cluster of peaks called *Jebel-Arnêto*, immediately in front of us on the right, rising 10,054 feet above the sea level, while those on the left are not much lower; and both of them, from their summits down to the vast hollow or cavity between them, exhibited one unbroken mass of dazzling snow. It is necessary to conceive of this foreground, in order to form any correct idea of the striking and almost supernatural appearance of the scene which here met our startled and bewildered eyes. Light fleecy clouds were sailing across our line of vision, from one mountain side to another. The glorious blue heaven was above our heads. Far down beneath us, at the bottom of the gorge, the plain, gleaming in bright sunshine, seemed almost at our feet. “*Tarabolûs—Tarabolûs*,” shouted *Tanûs*, pointing eagerly down to the outer margin of the plain. There was *Tripoli*, no doubt, shining brightly above the dark foliage of the groves and gardens around it; and there was the sea, as blue as the sky, and which seemed, by some optical illusion, to rise right up from the shore, so that the ships in the bay looked as if they were small tiny things painted on a bright blue wall. But stranger still, there was another expanse of blue, rising straight up also, and appearing above those fleecy clouds. Is it the sky? It must be; and yet there are ships up there too! It was not the sky but the sea; seen at the same moment both below and above the clouds! This may seem an exaggeration or an extravagance. It is literally true. It is but a feeble attempt to reproduce a picture such as I never expect again to see; but which was altogether the most marvellous and exciting which it is possible to conceive.

For half an hour we stood amid the snow gazing in a sort of ecstasy on this wonderful and truly glorious scene. It was nearly all that time before our senses became sufficiently sobered



to enable us to examine the details of the picture. And when we did so, the first object that attracted our notice, in a corner of the huge cavity or basin immediately beneath us, was a group of trees—one solitary clump—standing apparently on a floor of gray rock, and only a few hundred yards beneath the line of the snow. These were the cedars of Lebanon; all that remains of that magnificent forest from which the timber was brought to build the temple at Jerusalem.

An hour's cautious riding down the snowy slopes of the mountain brought us into the grove itself, where we spent the whole forenoon. It is an enchanting place. Though all is rocky and desolate around, the grove is carpeted with smooth green grass; and its verdant shade was most refreshing after the blinding glare of the snow. The grove covers about three acres of ground, and includes between 300 and 400 trees. The giants of the grove are usually counted at twelve. I measured them all, and found the smallest of them to be 24 feet, and the largest to be nearly 45 feet in circumference. Of the rest forty or fifty have an average circumference of from 10 to 12 feet, and the whole are fine healthy trees. The whole grove was fragrant with the aromatic odour of the cedar wood. A group of such trees would attract admiration anywhere, and even one of its giants would confer distinction on the finest park in the world. Placed where they are—amid scenery of unrivalled grandeur, and carrying the mind back, as they do, both by their hoary age and by their Scriptural associations, to the times of the most illustrious of Israel's kings, and to the noblest of all his works—it is impossible not to regard them with an interest amounting almost to veneration.

Half a mile below the Cedars, the plateau on which they stand drops down into a much smaller and narrower basin, at the lower extremity of which, on the face of a romantic cliff that overhangs it, is the little town of Bsherreh. Thus far, and for two or three miles farther, we were still in the territory of the tribe to which our guide Tanûs belonged. We had sent on

the muleteers with the baggage before us towards Ehden, an hour before we left the cedars, and were therefore brought to a stand when, all at once, on reaching the borders of the Ehden territory, Tanús sat down sorrowfully by the side of the path and told us he durst go no farther. We remonstrated; reminded him of his engagement, and of our entire ignorance of the road. It was in vain. He had heard, since crossing the mountain, such accounts of the state of feeling amongst the Ehden people that, even at the expense of forfeiting the half of his allowance, which we had still to pay him, he positively refused to proceed. We were disappointed, half-angry, but there was no help for it. We pushed on and fortunately overtook the muleteers. Our path all the way down to Ehden from the cedars, wound along among the steep rocks that overhang the right bank of the valley of the Kadisha—the holy river of Lebanon which descends from the cedars. The village of Ehden, at which we were to rest for the night, is 4747 feet above the level of the sea. The mountain-sides around it were all carefully terraced and cultivated. The Maronites, who inhabit the Lebanon from Tripoli as far south as Tyre, are an industrious race, and amount to about 150,000 souls. Their chief occupation is rearing the silk-worm, for feeding which their villages are surrounded with gardens of mulberry trees; and it was out of some petty dispute as to the ownership of some of these trees upon the march line between the people of Ehden and that of Bsherreh, that gave rise to the fierce feud that was now raging between them.

We arrived at the beautiful village of Ehden about five P.M. The priest of the village—for the Maronites are Christians of the Latin or Roman Catholic Church—met us at the entrance of the village, and conducted us to our camping ground, in a grove of fine walnut trees.

As we sat at dinner late in the evening, a head suddenly appeared between the folds of the tent. "Tanús!" we all exclaimed; "you here after all! How is this?" "Had it not been for this gun I would not have been here," was his reply.



The gun was Gaetano's. Gaetano had told us, on our reaching Ehden, that Tanûs had his gun. "Ah!" thought we, "the fellow is a rogue after all. He could well afford to go off without his full hire." But we had done him injustice. It was his desire to restore the gun that made him follow us. "But how came you," we asked, "to venture into this hostile territory?" His answer showed that chivalrous feeling is not dead among these wild mountaineers. "I advanced," said Tanûs, "into the Ehden country, and to the first of its people I met I told my story; explained to them that my honour was at stake, and that I wished to keep faith with the travellers I had engaged to guide, and I asked them if they would agree to protect me. They at once agreed, and I am here."

When we told the poor fellow how much we were gratified to find him turn out to be the true man we took him for, the tears started into his eyes and trickled down his rough cheek. It made him proud and happy, he said, to know that Englishmen thought well of Tanûs. We all heartily shook hands with him, paid him his hire with a good bonus, and bade God bless him.

Next day we arrived at Tripoli at two P.M.; and after a brief interview with the British consul and the American missionaries, rode down through two miles of beautiful fruit gardens, to El-Marina—the seaport of the city. The gallant *St. Ursula* was lying about a mile off in the bay; and at the very moment we arrived her gig was just putting off from the shore. Ten minutes more and we were sweeping over the rippling waters of the bay. "Well, Jack, has Laurence arrived?" was, as may be supposed, my first inquiry. "Yes, sir; a week ago." "How is he?" "First-rate, sir. He's away out there at the point of them rocks, with Mr. Cairney, in the jolly boat, looking for seafowl." It was enough. Our only anxiety was at an end, and our cup of mercies, and perhaps some eyes also, were running over. Mr. Cairney had, meanwhile, caught sight of the strange company in the gig, and we were scarcely on board the yacht when the jolly boat shot alongside, and there was a joyful meeting.

Next day Mr. Tennent and the ladies arrived. The same night we put to sea and ran down the coast to Beyrout, where we spent the following day. At four P.M. of Thursday, the 21st of May, we again weighed anchor and made sail for Malta, on our way home.

NOTE.—The circumstances alluded to at the close of the preface, have obliged the author to hurry too rapidly over the latter part of this narrative, and, for the present at least, to omit much which he had wished and intended to say.





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